THE THREATENING CATASTROPHE AND HOW TO FIGHT IT

BY

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Peace, bread and freedom were the gains which the broad masses of the people, according to Lenin, hoped to realise as a result of the revolution of March, 1917. Instead of peace, the government first promised to live up to the imperialist pacts made at the beginning of the war and then made good the promise by ordering an offensive at the front in July. The débâcle which followed cost the lives of nearly half a million soldiers in two weeks of wholesale slaughter.

Lenin and many other Bolshevik leaders were either living in hiding or in prison, or were under constant threat of arrest; demonstrations of workers in protest against the continuation of the war were fired upon by detachments of military cadets or Cossacks loyal to the government; the *Pravda* and other Bolshevik publications were continually being raided or closed—such was the freedom enjoyed by the militant workers who fought in the revolution.

As for bread, hunger was stalking throughout the land and economic ruin was enveloping the entire country. Industry and agriculture were going through the severest crisis; factories, shops and mills were closing in rapid succession, causing widespread unemployment; transportation was constantly becoming more disorganised and food was getting scarcer every day. The absence of a firm policy to deal with profiteering, which was rampant under the aegis of the government, was adding to the privation and misery of the people.

Lenin foresaw such a situation under the bourgeois government and in his "April Theses" (Little Lenin Library, Vol. 9) demanded "the immediate placing of the Soviet of Worker's Deputies in control of social production of goods." But the regulation of prices and of distribution of available supplies was, with the consent of the vacillating leadership in the Soviet, left with the bureaucratic governmental apparatus. With the government in the hands of the capitalists, such guaranties against hoarding and price boosting as may have been provided, remained on paper, and the necessaries of life continued to yield fabulous prices to the profiteers.

The creeping economic paralysis could be fought off only with the revolutionary measures proposed by Lenin. The capitalists would be deprived of a good share of their profits, but a minimum of supplies would be guaranteed to the people through the control of production and distribution of commodities and the husbanding of resources by democratic organisations of the masses which Lenin

proposed should be elected by the workers in the shops and factories.

But to completely save the country from economic ruin, Lenin held, power must pass into the hands of the workers in alliance with the poor peasants. With that accomplished, the country could not only come out of the crisis, but could also "catch up with the advanced countries and surpass them also *economically*"—almost a verbatim formulation of the slogan of the Five-Year Plan. The conquest of power by the proletariat could insure the proper organisation of the national economy in the interest of the entire population. According to Lenin, the road toward the efficacious regulation of economic life in the interest of the broad masses, was the road to Socialism.

The chief essay in this collection (pp. 5-44) was written during September 23-27. But four months before this Lenin warned in his article "Unavoidable Catastrophe and Boundless Promises" (pp. 45-50) about the growing economic ruin and proposed a method of fighting it.

The Bolsheviks were accused of fomenting civil war and endangering the revolution. In his article "The Russian Revolution and Civil War," included in this collection (pp. 51-64), Lenin reviews the spontaneous mass movements of the workers and soldiers on May 3-4 (against the declaration of the government to carry on the war with the same imperialist aims as those of the Tsar's government), on July 16-17 (against Kerensky's offensive with the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of soldiers), and on September 9-14 (to liquidate the counter-revolution led by General Kornilov whom Kerensky made Commander-in-Chief of the armies and used as the main prop of his government). Each of these mass movements registered the development of the revolution to higher stages, with Bolshevik slogans coming more and more into prominence and the Bolshevik Party being accepted by the masses as the leader and organiser of their struggles to secure the fruits of the revolution wrested from them by the bourgeoisie.

ALEXANDER TRACHTENBERG.

THE THREATENING CATASTROPHE AND HOW TO FIGHT IT

Famine Is Approaching

Russia is threatened with an inevitable catastrophe. Railroad transportation is unbelievably disorganised and is being disorganised more and more. The railroads will stop running. The delivery of raw materials and coal to the factories will cease. The delivery of grain will cease. The capitalists are deliberately and consistently sabotaging (damaging, stopping, wrecking, hampering) production, hoping that a terrible catastrophe may mean the collapse of the republic and democracy, of the Soviets and the proletarian and peasants' unions, thus facilitating the return of a monarchy and the restoration of the full power of the bourgeoisie and landowners.

A catastrophe of extraordinary dimensions, and a famine, are unavoidably threatening. This has been stated innumerable times in all the papers. An immense number of resolutions has been adopted both by the parties and by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, resolutions which admit that the catastrophe is inevitable, that it is looming close at hand, that a desperate fight against it is necessary, that "heroic efforts" on the part of the people are necessary to avert the calamity, and so forth.

Everybody says that. Everybody recognises that. Everybody has agreed to that.

And nothing is being done.

Half a year of revolution has passed. The catastrophe has come still closer. Things have come to a state of mass unemployment. Think of it: the country is suffering from a lack of commodities; the country is perishing from lack of products, from lack of working hands at a time when there is a sufficient quantity of food and raw materials—and still, in a country like this, at a critical moment like this, mass unemployment has developed! What other proof is necessary for the fact that during half a year of revolution (which some call great, but which so far it would be more correct to call rotten), under a democratic republic with an abundance

of unions, organs, institutions that proudly call themselves "revolutionary-democratic," in reality nothing, absolutely *nothing* serious has been done against the catastrophe, against the famine! We are approaching nearer and nearer to a crash, for the war does not wait and the disorganisation of all realms of people's life resulting from it is becoming ever greater.

And yet, a very small amount of attention and reflection is sufficient to convince one that there are means of fighting the catastrophe and the famine, that the means of struggle are perfectly clear and simple, perfectly realisable, perfectly within reach of the people's forces, and that those measures are *not* being undertaken *only and solely* because their realisation would infringe upon the immense profits of a handful of landowners and capitalists.

Indeed, you can wager that you won't find a single speech, a single article in a paper of any political tendency, a single resolution of any gathering or institution where there would not be recognised with perfect clarity and precision the fundamental means of fighting, the means of preventing catastrophe and famine. This means is control, supervision, accounting, state regulation, the establishment of a correct distribution of labour forces in the production and distribution of products, husbanding the resources of the people, elimination of any waste of forces, the utmost economy. Control, supervision, accounting—this is the first word in the fight against catastrophe and famine. This is what arouses no objection and is universally admitted. And it is just this which is *not being done,* out of fear of encroaching upon the omnipotence of the landowners and capitalists, upon their enormous, unheard-of, scandalous profits which are being made through the high cost of living, through deliveries of military supplies (it is well known that every one is "working" for the war, directly or indirectly), profits which every one knows about, every one observes, every one laments and bemoans.

And it is just for a more or less serious control, accounting and supervision on the part of the state that nothing whatever is being done.

Complete Inactivity of the Government

Everywhere a systematic, methodical sabotage of all control, supervision and accounting, of every attempt on the part of the state to organise them, is going on. An unbelievable naïveté is

required not to understand, a deep hypocrisy is required to pretend not to understand, whence this sabotage comes and by what means it is being carried on. For this sabotage on the part of the bankers and capitalists, their *disruption* of all control, supervision and accounting, adapts itself to the state forms of a democratic republic, it adapts itself to the existence of "revolutionary-democratic" institutions. The capitalist gentlemen have wonderfully assimilated the truth which, in words, is recognised by all adherents of scientific Socialism, but which the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries tried to forget immediately after their friends had secured the berths of Ministers, Assistant Ministers, etc. This truth is that the economic essence of capitalist exploitation is not in the least interfered with by the substitution of republican-democratic forms of government for the monarchist form, and that, consequently, the reverse is also true, namely, that it is necessary to change only the *form* of struggle for the inviolability and sanctity of capitalist profits to defend it under a democratic republic just as successfully as it was defended under an absolute monarchy.

The present-day, modern republican-democratic sabotage of every control, accounting and supervision, consists in that the capitalists in words "warmly" recognise the "principle" of control and its necessity (as do all the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s, of course), but that they only insist on the introduction of this control being "gradual," planned and "regulated by the state." In reality these innocent little words are used to cover up the *disruption* of control, its transformation into nothing, into a fiction, into a mere game; they are used to delay all business-like and serious practical steps; to create unusually complicated, bulky and bureaucratically lifeless institutions of control entirely dependent upon the capitalists and doing, and able to do, absolutely nothing.

In order to substantiate our statements, we shall refer to witnesses from among the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s, *i.e.*, those very people who had a majority in the Soviets during the first half year of the Revolution, who participated in the "coalition government" and who are therefore politically responsible before the Russian workers and peasants for their being lenient to the capitalists, for the latter's disruption of all control.

In the official organ of the highest of the so-called "plenipotentiary" (no joking!) organs of the revolutionary democracy, namely, in the *Izvestiya* of the C.E.C. (*i.e.*, the Central Executive

Committee of the All-Russian Congress of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies), in No. 164, September 20, 1917, there has been published a *decision* of a special institution for dealing with control questions, created by the same Mensheviks and S.-R.'s and entirely in their hands. This special institution is the Economic Section of the Central Executive Committee. In this decision there is officially recognised, as a fact, "*the absolute lack of activity on the part of the central organs created to work with the government for the regulation of economic life.*"

Can one imagine a more eloquent testimonial to the collapse of the Menshevik and S.-R. policy than this, signed by the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s themselves?

Even under tsarism the necessity of regulating economic life was recognised, and some institutions were created for this purpose. But under tsarism economic ruin was growing and growing, reaching monstrous proportions. It was immediately recognised as the task of a republican, revolutionary government to take earnest, decisive measures for doing away with economic ruin. When the "coalition" government, with the participation of the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s, was being organised, a promise was made in the government's solemn public declaration of May 19, and an obligation was undertaken, to establish state control and regulation. The Tseretelis and Chernovs, as well as all the Menshevik and S.-R. leaders, swore emphatically that they were not only responsible for the government but that the "plenipotentiary organs of revolutionary democracy" in their hands actually did follow up the work of the government and examine it.

Four months have passed since May 19, four long months, during which Russia has sacrificed hundreds of thousands of soldiers in an absurd imperialist "advance"; during which economic ruin and catastrophe have been approaching with seven league boots, during which the summer time opened exceptional possibilities for doing a great deal with regard to water transportation, agriculture and prospecting in the realm of mining, etc., etc.; and now after four months, the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s are compelled officially to recognise the "absolute lack of activity" on the part of the control institutions created to work with the government!!

And those very same Mensheviks and S.-R.'s prattle now with the earnest mien of statesmen (we are writing these lines on the very eve of the Democratic Conference of September 25) that

matters can be remedied by changing the coalition with the Cadets * into a coalition with the commercial and industrial Kit Kityches,** Ryabushinskys, Bublikovs, Tereshchenkos and Co.

The question is: how can this amazing blindness of the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s be explained? Shall we consider them infant statesmen who, because of extreme stupidity and naïveté, are unconscious of what they are doing and are erring in good faith? Or has the abundance of posts for Ministers, Assistant Ministers, governor-generals, commissars and similar berths the property of generating specific "political" blindness?

Universally Known and Easy Measures of Control

The question may arise as to whether the methods and measures of control represent something extraordinarily complicated, difficult, never tried out, even unknown. Is not the delay to be explained by the fact that the statesmen of the Cadet Party, of the commercial and industrial class, of the S.-R. and Menshevik Parties, have already been labouring in the sweat of their brow for half a year searching out, studying, discovering measures and methods of control, but that the problem is proving tremendously difficult and is still unsolved?

Alas! There is an attempt here to "bamboozle" the unenlightened, illiterate and downtrodden peasants and "man in the street," who believe everything and do not probe into anything—an attempt to present the case in this way. In reality even tsarism, even the "old regime," by creating War Industries Committees, *was familiar* with the fundamental measures, with the main method and way of control: uniting the population in groups according to profession, purpose of work, branch of labour, etc. Tsarism, however, *was afraid* of uniting the population; it therefore limited in every possible way, cramped artificially, this universally known, very easy, perfectly applicable method and way of control.

All the belligerent states, experiencing extreme burdens and miseries of war, experiencing in one degree or another economic ruin and famine, have long since mapped out, determined, adopted, tested *a whole series* of control measures which almost always

* Abbreviated name of the bourgeois Constitutional-Democratic Party. —*Ed.*

** Kit Kitych, a character in a play by the classic Russian playwright, Ostrovsky. It personifies a rich, wilful and ignorant man who rules despotically over his family and his subordinates.—*Ed.*

reduce themselves to uniting the population, to creating or encouraging all sorts of unions with the participation of representatives of the state, with supervision on the part of the state, etc. All these measures of control are universally known; much has been spoken and written about them; the laws promulgated by the advanced belligerent powers relative to control have been translated into Russian or reported in detail in the Russian press.

If our state really *wished* to realise control in a business-like, serious manner, if its institutions had not doomed themselves, through their servility before the capitalists, to "absolute inactivity," the government would only have to draw liberally from the very rich source of control measures that are already known and have already been adopted. The only obstacle to this step—an obstacle which the Cadets, S.-R.'s and Mensheviks screen from the eyes of the people—has been and is this: that control would disclose the enormous profits of the capitalists and would undermine these profits.

In order to elucidate more graphically this highly important question (which in substance is tantamount to the question of a programme for *every* really revolutionary government which would undertake to save Russia from war and famine), let us enumerate those principal measures of control, and let us examine each of them.

We shall see that, for a government which calls itself revolutionary-democratic not in a mocking sense only, it would have been sufficient to decree (to decide, to order) in the very first week of its existence the introduction of the principal measures of control; to fix serious, heavy penalties for capitalists who fraudulently evade control; and to appeal to the population itself to watch the capitalists, to see to their scrupulous observance of the decisions concerning control. Had this been done, control would long since have been put into effect in Russia.

Here are those principal measures:

1. Unification of all banks into one; state control over its operations, or nationalisation of the banks.

2. Nationalisation of the syndicates, *i.e.*, the largest monopoly associations of the capitalists (the sugar, naphtha, coal, metallurgical syndicates, etc.).

3. Abolition of commercial secrets.

4. Compulsory syndication (*i.e.*, compulsory unification into as-

sociations) of industrialists, merchants and employers in general.

5. Compulsory organisation of the population into consumers' associations; or encouragement of such unification and the control over them.

Let us examine the significance each of those measures would have, provided they were realised in a revolutionary-democratic way.

Nationalisation of the Banks

Banks are known to represent centres of modern economic life; they are the main nerve centres of the entire capitalist system of national economy. To speak of "regulation of economic life" while evading the question of nationalisation of the banks means either to exhibit utter ignorance or to deceive the "plain people" by fine words and high-sounding promises with the premeditated intention of not carrying these promises out.

To control and regulate the delivery of foodstuffs and the production and distribution of products generally without controlling or regulating bank operations is an absurdity. It is like hunting after kopecks that cross your way accidentally, while closing your eyes to millions of rubles. Modern banks have become so intimately and indissolubly connected with trade (in grain and everything else) and industry that, without "laying hands" on the banks, it is absolutely impossible to do anything serious, anything "revolutionary-democratic."

But, perhaps, this operation of the state "laying hands" on the banks is some sort of very difficult and complicated matter? There is usually an attempt to frighten the philistines by such a picture—the efforts are made, of course, by the capitalists and their defenders because it is to their advantage.

In reality, nationalisation of the banks, without taking away from any "owner" a single kopeck, presents absolutely no difficulties, either technical or cultural, and is being thwarted *exclusively* by the interests of filthy greed on the part of an insignificant handful of the rich. If nationalisation of the banks is so often confused with confiscation of private property, the dissemination of this confusion of terms is to be blamed on the bourgeois press, to whose interest it is to deceive the public.

Ownership of the capital which is manipulated by the banks, and which is concentrated in the banks, is attested by printed and written certificates, called stocks, bonds, notes, promissory notes,

etc. None of these certificates is lost or changed when the banks are nationalised, *i.e.*, when all the banks are fused into one state bank. Whoever had 15 rubles in a savings bank account remains the owner of the 15 rubles after the nationalisation of the banks, and whoever had 15 millions will still have 15 millions in the form of stocks, bonds, promissory notes, commercial paper, and the like, even after the nationalisation of the banks.

Then what is the significance of the nationalisation of the banks?

The significance is that no real control is possible over individual banks and their operations (even after abolition of the commercial secret, etc.), for it is impossible to trace all those most complicated, most involved and subtle methods used in drawing up the balance-sheets, in organising bogus enterprises and branch banks, in using fictitious persons, and so on and so forth. Only the merging of all the banks into one, while in itself not signifying the least change in property relations, while, we repeat, not depriving a single owner of a single kopeck, offers the *possibility* of real control—of course, provided all the other measures indicated above are applied. Only when the banks are nationalised, is it possible to reach a stage where the state knows whither and how, from where and at what time millions and billions are flowing. And only control over the banks, over the centre, over the backbone and main mechanism of capitalist circulation, would allow, not in words but in deeds, the organisation of control over the whole economic life, over the production and distribution of the most essential products, the organisation of that "regulation of economic life" which otherwise is inevitably doomed to remain a ministerial phrase to fool the plain people. Only control over bank operations, provided they are merged into one state bank, will allow, simultaneously with other measures which can easily be put into effect, the actual levying of an income tax without concealment of property and income, while at present the income tax is to a very large degree a fiction.

It would be sufficient just to decree the nationalisation of the banks—the measure would then be carried out by the directors and employees themselves. No special apparatus, no special preparatory steps on the part of the state are here required; this measure can be actually realised by one decree, "at one blow." For the economic possibility of such a measure has been created by capitalism itself, once it has developed to the stage of promissory

notes, stocks, bonds, etc. What remains to be done here is only the *unification of bookkeeping*, and if the revolutionary-democratic state decreed that in each city meetings should be called immediately, by telegraph, and in each region and throughout the country congresses of directors and employees should be called for the merging, without delay, of all banks into one state bank, this reform would be carried out within a few weeks. It is obvious that the directors and the higher officials would be the ones to offer resistance, to try and deceive the state, to delay the matter, etc., for these gentlemen would lose their particularly lucrative berths, would lose the opportunity of particularly profitable fraudulent operations—*and this is where the crux of the matter is.* But as to technical difficulties in the way of merging the banks, there are none whatever, and if the state power were revolutionary not only in words (*i.e.*, if it were not afraid to break with inertia and routine), if it were democratic not only in words (*i.e.*, if it acted in the interests of the majority of the people and not of a handful of rich persons), it would be sufficient to decree the confiscation of property and prison as punishment for the directors, board members and large shareholders for the least delay and for attempting to conceal documents and accounts; it would, for instance, be sufficient to unite the poor employees *separately* and to give them premiums for uncovering frauds and delays on the part of the rich—and the nationalisation of the banks would be accomplished most smoothly, most swiftly.

The advantages from the nationalisation of the banks for the whole people, and *not* especially for the workers (for the workers have little to do with banks) but for the mass of peasants and small industrialists, would be enormous. The saving of labour, as a result, would be gigantic, and assuming that the state would retain the former number of bank employees, the nationalisation would signify a highly important step in the direction of making the use of the banks universal, in the direction of increasing the number of their branches, the accessibility of their operations, etc., etc. The accessibility and the easy terms of credit, particularly for *small* owners, for the peasantry, would increase immensely. As for the state, it would for the first time be in a position to *survey* all the main monetary operations without concealing them, then to *control* them, then to *regulate* economic life, and finally to *obtain* millions and billions for large state operations, without paying the capitalist

gentlemen sky-high "commissions" for their "services." This is the reason—the only reason—why all the capitalists, all the bourgeois professors, all the bourgeoisie, all the Plekhanovs, Potresovs, and Co. serving the bourgeoisie are foaming at the mouth fighting against the nationalisation of the banks, inventing thousands of pleas against this greatest and most urgent measure, although *even* from the standpoint of "defending" the country, *i.e.*, from the military standpoint, this measure would be a gigantic plus, enhancing the "military prowess" of the country to an enormous degree.

One may perhaps object, asking why such advanced states as Germany and the United States of America are putting into practice a splendid "regulation of economic life," without even thinking of nationalising the banks.

The reason is, we answer, that these states, though one is a monarchy and the other a republic, are *both* not only capitalist but also imperialist. As such they carry out the necessary reforms in a reactionary-bureaucratic way, whereas we here speak of a revolutionary-democratic way.

This "little difference" has very substantial significance. In most cases "it is not proper" to think about it. The words "revolutionary democracy" have become with us (particularly with the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks) almost a conventional phrase, like the expression "Thank God" used also by people who are not so ignorant as to believe in God, or like the expression "worthy citizen" sometimes addressed even to a contributor of the *Dyen* or *Yedinstvo,* although every one surmises that these papers were founded and are maintained by the capitalists and in the interests of the capitalists, and that, therefore, the participation in them of quasi-Socialists is but very little "worthy."

If the words "revolutionary democracy" are to be used not as a stereotyped official phrase, not as a conventional nickname, but as something whose meaning has to be *thought* about, then to be a democrat means to take into account the interests of the majority and not of a minority of the people; to be a revolutionary in reality means to smash, in the most decisive, the most merciless manner, all that is injurious, all that is obsolete. Neither in America nor in Germany do the government or the ruling classes claim, as far as we know, the title "revolutionary democracy" which our S.-R.'s and Mensheviks claim (and which they prostitute).

There are only *four* very large private banks in Germany of

general national importance, there are only *two* such banks in America. It is easier, more convenient, more profitable for the financial kings of these banks to unite privately, secretly, in a reactionary, not in a revolutionary way, in a bureaucratic, not in a democratic way, bribing state officials (which is a general rule both in America *and in Germany*), retaining the private character of the banks just for the purpose of retaining the secrecy of operations, just for the purpose of getting millions upon millions of "super-profits" from that same state, just for the purpose of safeguarding fraudulent financial tricks.

Both America and Germany "regulate economic life" in such a manner as to create a *military prison* for the workers (partly for the peasants) and a *paradise* for the bankers and capitalists. Their regulation consists in "tightening the screw" on the workers to the extent of near-famine, and securing for the capitalists (secretly, in a reactionary, bureaucratic way) *larger* profits than those they had before the war.

Such a way is quite possible also for republican-imperialist Russia; it is being realised not only by the Milyukovs and Shingarevs but also by the Kerenskys jointly with Tereshchenko, Nekrasov, Bernatsky, Prokopovich, and Co., who *also defend* in a reactionary, bureaucratic way the "inviolability" of the banks, their sacred rights to enormous profits. This being the case, let us speak the *truth.* The wish in republican Russia is to regulate the economic life in a reactionary, bureaucratic way; but one is often hampered in carrying it out by the existence of the Soviets, which Kornilov Number One has not succeeded in dispersing, but which a Kornilov Number Two will attempt to disperse. . . .

This will be the truth. And this simple though bitter truth is more useful for the enlightenment of the people than the sugary lie about "our" "great" "revolutionary" democracy. . . .

The nationalisation of the banks would greatly facilitate the simultaneous nationalisation of the insurance business, *i.e.,* the merging of all insurance companies into one, the centralisation of their activities, the control over them by the state. Congresses of employees of insurance companies would here, too, carry out this merging immediately and without any difficulty, if the revolutionary-democratic state decreed it and ordered the directors of the boards and the large shareholders to carry it out without the least delay,

on the strict responsibility of every one. The insurance business has hundreds of millions invested in it by the capitalists, and all the work is done by employees. A merger in this business would lower the insurance premiums and would yield a great number of conveniences and advantages to the insured; it would make it possible to extend the field of insurance with the same expenditure of forces and means. No other circumstances besides inertia, routine, and greed on the part of a handful of holders of lucrative posts are in the way of this reform, which would, again, raise the "defensive capacity" of the country, too, by saving people's labour, by opening a number of most earnest possibilities for "regulating economic life" not in words but in deeds.

Nationalisation of the Syndicates

Capitalism differs from the old pre-capitalist systems of national economy in that it has created the most intimate connection and interdependence between its various branches. If it were not for that, no steps towards Socialism, we may say in passing, would be technically realisable. As to modern capitalism, with the domination of the banks over production, it has developed this interdependence of the various branches of national economy to the highest degree. Banks and the largest branches of industry and commerce have grown into one indissoluble whole. This means, on the one hand, that it is impossible to nationalise the banks without taking steps towards the creation of a state monopoly of commercial and industrial syndicates (the sugar, coal, iron, oil and other syndicates), without nationalising those syndicates; on the other hand, it means that the regulation of economic life, if it is to be realised in earnest, demands a simultaneous nationalisation of both banks and syndicates.

Let us take the sugar syndicate as an example. It was created under tsarism and it then led to uniting in a large-scale capitalist way splendidly equipped plants, this uniting, of course, having been permeated through and through by a most reactionary and bureaucratic spirit, securing scandalously high profits for the capitalists and placing the employees and the workers in the position of humiliated, degraded slaves without any rights. The state then controlled and regulated production in favour of the wealthy magnates.

What remains here is *only* to turn the reactionary-bureaucratic

regulation into a revolutionary-democratic one by a simple decree ordering the convocation of a congress of employees, engineers, directors and shareholders, the introduction of a uniform accounting system, control by the trade unions, etc. This is the simplest thing—and it remains undone!! *In reality*, there remains under a democratic republic the reactionary-bureaucratic regulation of the sugar industry; everything remains as of old: the plunder of the people's labour, routine and inertia, enrichment of the Bobrinskys and Tereshchenkos. To call on the democracy and not the bureaucracy, the workers and employees and not the "sugar kings," to show independent initiative—this could and should have been done in a few days, at one blow, if the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks had not befogged the consciousness of the people by plans of a "coalition" with these very same sugar kings, a coalition with the rich, which quite inevitably leads to "complete inactivity" of the government as far as the regulation of economic life is concerned.*

Take the oil industry. It was already "socialised" on a gigantic scale by the preceding development of capitalism. A couple of oil kings—those are the ones who manipulate millions and hundreds of millions, clipping coupons, gathering fabulous profits from a "business" which is *already* practically, technically, and socially organised on a national scale, which is *already* being managed by hundreds and thousands of employees, engineers, etc. The nationalisation of the oil industry is possible *at once*, and is obligatory for a revolutionary-democratic state, especially at a time when it is passing through a great crisis, when it is necessary at all costs to conserve people's labour and to increase the production of fuel. It is obvious that here bureaucratic control will yield nothing, will change nothing, for the "oil kings" will as easily be able to manage the Tereshchenkos, Kerenskys, Avksentyevs, and the Skobelevs, as they managed the Tsar's Ministers—resorting to procrastination, excuses, promises, even directly and indirectly bribing the bourgeois press (which is called "public opinion" and which the Kerenskys and the Avksentyevs "take into consideration"), bribing the officials

* These lines had already been written when I read in the newspapers that the Kerensky government was introducing a sugar monopoly, and, of course, introducing it in a reactionary-bureaucratic way, without meetings of the employees and workers, without publicity, and without curbing the capitalists!!

(who are being left by the Kerenskys and Avksentyevs in their old posts in the old, intact state apparatus).

In order to do something serious, one must pass, in a really revolutionary way, from bureaucracy to democracy, *i.e.*, declare a war against the oil kings and shareholders, decree the confiscation of their property, and jail sentences for delaying the nationalisation of the oil industry, for concealing incomes or accounts, for sabotaging production, for not taking steps towards increasing production. One must turn to the initiative of the workers and employees, to call *them* immediately into conferences and congresses, to give over to *them* a certain share of the profits on condition that a thorough control be organised and the production be increased. Had such revolutionary-democratic steps been taken immediately, promptly, in April, 1917, then Russia, one of the richest countries of the world in reserves of liquid fuel, could have done during the summer, with the aid of water transportation, a great deal in the way of furnishing the people with the necessary amount of fuel.

Neither the bourgeois nor the coalition government of S.-R.'s, Mensheviks and Cadets did anything; they confined themselves to playing at reforms in a bureaucratic way. Not a single revolutionary-democratic step did they dare to undertake. The same oil kings, the same inertia, the same hatred of the workers and employees towards the exploiters, the same state of dilapidation in this realm, the same plundering of people's labour—all as it was under tsarism, with a change only in the *titles* of the documents issued and received by the "republican" offices!

Concerning the coal industry, which is no less "ready," technically and culturally, for nationalisation, which is no less shamelessly managed by the coal kings, the robbers of the people, we have a number of very telling *facts* of direct sabotage, of direct *wrecking* and stopping of production by the industrialists. Even the ministerial Menshevik *Rabochaya Gazeta* has admitted these facts. And the result? Nothing, absolutely nothing has been done except old, reactionary-bureaucratic "half and half" conferences, with equal numbers of delegates from the workers and from the bandits of the coal syndicates!!

Not a single revolutionary-democratic step; not a shadow of an attempt to establish the only real control *from below*, through a union of employees, through the workers, by means of terror against

the coal operators who are ruining the country and stopping production! How can it be otherwise when we "all" are in favour of a "coalition," if not with the Cadets, then with the commercial and industrial circles, and when coalition means leaving power with the capitalists, letting them go unpunished, letting them obstruct business, blame everything on the workers, increase economic ruin, and prepare *in this way* a new Kornilov affair.

Abolition of Commercial Secrets

Without abolishing commercial secrets, control over production and distribution either remains the most idle promise, necessary only for the Cadets to fool the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks and for the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks to fool the labouring classes, or it can be realised only by reactionary-bureaucratic methods and measures. Obvious as this may be for every unbiased person, insistent as was the *Pravda* * in demanding the abolition of commercial secrets (which was largely the reason why it was shut down by Kerensky, who is servile before capital), neither our republican government nor the "plenipotentiary organs of revolutionary democracy" as much as gave a thought to this *first word* of real control.

It is here that we have the key to all control. It is here that we have the most sensitive spot of capital which robs the people and sabotages production. It is for this reason that the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks are afraid to touch this point.

The usual argument of the capitalists, thoughtlessly repeated by the petty bourgeoisie, is that capitalist economy by no means allows the abolition of commercial secrets generally, for private property in the means of production and the dependence of individual enterprises upon the market necessitates, they say, the "sacred inviolability" of books and commercial, including banking, transactions.

Persons in one way or another repeating these and similar arguments, allow themselves to be fooled and in turn fool the people by closing their eyes to the two most fundamental, most important and generally known facts of modern economic life. First fact: large-scale capitalism, *i.e.*, the peculiar economy of banks, syndicates, large factories, etc. Second fact: war.

It is precisely modern large-scale capitalism, becoming everywhere monopoly capitalism, which removes every shadow of

* V. I. Lenin, *Revolution of 1917, Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Book II, p. 141.—*Ed.*

reasonableness from the commercial secret, which makes it a hypocritical thing and an instrument solely for the concealment of financial swindles and the incredible profits of large-scale capital. Large-scale capitalist economy is, by its technical nature, socialised economy, *i.e.*, it both works for millions of people and unites by its operations, directly and indirectly, hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands of families. This is not the same as the economy of the small artisan or middle peasant, who as a rule keep no books at all, and who are therefore in no way affected by the abolition of commercial secrets!

In large-scale economy the operations are known to hundreds and more persons, anyway. The law safeguarding commercial secrets serves here not the requirements of production or exchange but of speculation and enrichment in the crudest form; it aids direct swindle, which, as is well known, is particularly widespread in stock companies, and is most cleverly concealed by accounts and balance-sheets so contrived as to fool the public.

If the commercial secret is unavoidable in small commodity economy, *i.e.*, among small peasants and artisans where production itself is not socialised, where it is atomised and distributed among many, then in large-scale capitalist economy the safeguarding of this secret means safeguarding the privileges and profits of literally a handful of people *against* the entire people. This has already been recognised even by law, in so far as the publication of the accounts of stock companies has been introduced. But *this* control, already realised in all the advanced countries, as well as in Russia, is reactionary-bureaucratic control, which does not open the eyes of the people, which *does not allow* them to know *the whole truth* concerning the operations of stock companies.

In order to act in a revolutionary-democratic fashion, it would be necessary immediately to put in force a law abolishing commercial secrets, demanding of large-scale establishments and of rich people the completest accounts, granting any group of citizens comprising a substantial democratic number (say 1,000 or 10,000 voters) the right to examine *all* the documents of any large-scale enterprise. Such a measure can be easily and completely realised by a simple decree; and it is such a measure *alone* that would allow the *people's* initiative of control to unfold itself through the unions of employees, through the unions of workers, and through

all the political parties; only such a measure would render control earnest and democratic.

Add to this the war. An immense majority of the commercial and industrial enterprises are now working not for the "open market," but *for the government*, for the war. I have already pointed out in the *Pravda* that those who argue against us by pleading the impossibility of introducing Socialism, are lying, they are thrice lying, for what we are here dealing with is not the introduction of Socialism immediately, for the present day, but the exposure *of treasury looting.**

Capitalist economy working "for the war" (*i.e.*, economy directly or indirectly connected with war contracts) is systematic, legalised *treasury looting*. And the Cadet gentlemen, together with the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s who are against the abolition of commercial secrets, are nothing but *aiders and abettors* of treasury looters.

The war costs Russia fifty million rubles *daily*. Most of these fifty millions daily go to war contracts. Out of these fifty millions, at least five, and possibly ten and more *every day*, form the "legitimate profits" of the capitalists and the officials who are in collusion with them in one way or another. The particularly large firms and banks which loan money for war contract operations, reap unheard-of profits in this respect; they wax rich on treasury looting —for no other name can be found for this swindling and skinning of the people "on the occasion" of war disasters, "on the occasion" of the death of hundreds of thousands and millions of people.

"Everybody" knows of these scandalous profits made on contracts, of "promissory notes" issued by the banks, of fortunes made out of the mounting high prices; everybody speaks of it in "society" with a smirk. A good deal of exact information concerning this situation is to be found *even* in the bourgeois press, which, as a rule, evades "ticklish" questions. Everybody knows this, and everybody keeps quiet; everybody tolerates it, and everybody is at peace with the government, which talks grandiloquently about "control" and "regulation"!

Revolutionary democrats, if they were really revolutionists and democrats, would immediately promulgate a law abolishing commercial secrets, obliging contractors and merchants to render accounts, prohibiting them from relinquishing their field of activities

* V. I. Lenin, *Revolution of 1917, Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Book II, p. 236.—*Ed.*

without permission of the authorities, introducing confiscation of property and the firing squad * for hiding anything and defrauding the people, organising examination of affairs and control *from below* in a democratic way, on the part of the people itself, on the part of unions, employees, workers, consumers, etc.

Our S.-R.'s and Mensheviks fully deserve the appellation "frightened democrats," for as far as this question is concerned, they repeat the things talked of by all frightened philistines, namely, that the capitalists would "run away" if the measures applied to them were "too severe," that without the capitalists "we" could not manage, that perhaps even the Anglo-French millionaires who "support" us may "be offended," and so forth. One would think that the Bolsheviks are proposing something unprecedented in the history of mankind, something never tested, something "Utopian"; whereas, as early as one hundred and twenty-five years ago, in France, men who were real "revolutionary democrats," who were really convinced of the just defensive character of the war on their part, who really based themselves on the masses of the people, sincerely convinced of the same things—those men knew how to establish a *revolutionary* control over the rich, and how to achieve results that commanded the admiration of the whole world. During the last century and a quarter the development of capitalism, having created banks, syndicates, railroads, etc., etc., has rendered measures of a really democratic control on the part of the workers and peasants over the exploiters, the landowners, and capitalists, a hundred times easier and more simple.

Strictly speaking, the entire question of control reduces itself to the point of who controls whom, *i.e.*, which class is the controlling and which is the controlled one. Up to now, in our republican Russia, with the connivance of the "plenipotentiary organs" of quasi-revolutionary democracy, the landowners and the capitalists are recognised and retained as controllers. As a result, capitalist looting is inevitable, with the accompanying indignation of the people, and with the economic ruin which is artificially fostered by the capitalists. What is necessary is to pass over, decisively, un-

* I have already had occasion to point out in the Bolshevik press that an argument against capital punishment must be recognised as correct only when it is against applying it *to the masses* of the toilers on the part of the exploiters, in the interests of safeguarding exploitation. It is doubtful whether any revolutionary government will be able to get along without capital punishment applied to the exploiters (*i.e.*, landowners and capitalists).

hesitatingly, not being afraid of breaking with the old, not being afraid of courageously building the new, to control *over* the landowners and capitalists by the workers and peasants. And it is precisely this which the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks are afraid of more than fire.

Compulsory Organisation Into Unions

Compulsory syndication, *i.e.*, compulsory organisation into unions, *e.g.*, the unions of industrialists, has already been put into practice in Germany. There is nothing new in this either. Here, too, it is the fault of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks that we see complete stagnation in republican Russia, which these none-too-esteemed parties entertain with a quadrille which they dance with the Cadets, with the Bublikovs, or with Tereshchenko and Kerensky.

Compulsory syndication signifies on the one hand a certain acceleration of capitalist development brought about by the state. This development leads always and everywhere to the organisation of the class struggle, to the growth of the number, variety, and importance of unions. On the other hand, this compulsory "unionisation" is the necessary prerequisite for any sort of earnest control and any saving of the people's labour. The German law, for instance, makes it compulsory for the leather manufacturers of a given locality, or of a whole state, to unite into an association, with a representative of the state participating in the board for the purpose of control. Such a law does not directly, in itself, infringe upon the relations of private property in any degree; it does not take away a single kopeck from any owner, and it does not presage whether the control would be conducted in reactionary-bureaucratic or in revolutionary-democratic forms, trends or spirit.

Such laws could and should be put into force in our country immediately, losing not one week of the precious time, and leaving it to the *social circumstances themselves* to determine the more concrete forms of realising the law, the means of supervising its realisation, etc. The state needs here neither a special apparatus nor special research, nor any preparatory investigations for putting such a law into effect; what is needed is only the determination to break with some private interests of the capitalists who are "not used" to such interference, who are not willing to lose the super-profits which are assured as long as the old business method of no control prevails.

Neither an apparatus nor "statistics" (which Chernov wished to substitute for the revolutionary initiative of the peasantry) are necessary for the promulgation of such a law. Its realisation must be charged to the manufacturers or industrialists themselves, to the *existing* social forces; it must be carried out also under the control of existing social (*i.e.*, non-governmental, non-bureaucratic) forces, but necessarily under the control of those hailing from the so-called "lower estates," *i.e.*, from the oppressed, exploited classes who, throughout history, have always proved to be immeasurably *higher* than the exploiters, as far as capacity for heroism, for self-sacrifice, for comradely discipline is concerned.

Let us assume that we have a really revolutionary-democratic government and that it decrees that all manufacturers and industrialists in every branch of production, in cases where they employ, say, no less than two workers, are obliged immediately to unite into county and province associations. Responsibility for the scrupulous carrying out of this law is put primarily on the manufacturers, the directors, the members of the boards, the large shareholders (for these are the real leaders of modern industry, its real masters). For evading the work of immediately carrying the law into practice, these people are looked upon as deserters from military service, and are punished as such by being responsible, all for one and one for all, with their property subject to confiscation. In the second place, responsibility is placed on all the office employees, who are also obliged to form *one* union, as well as on the workers with their trade unions. The aim of "unionisation" is the establishment of the most complete, the most drastic and detailed accounting, and, above all, the *unification of operations* in the purchase of raw materials, in the selling of manufactured goods, in the conservation of national resources. When scattered individual enterprises are united into one syndicate, this conservation of national resources is tremendous; this is proved by economic science and the example of syndicates, cartels, and trusts. It must be repeated once more that, in itself, organisation into a syndicate does not change one iota the relations of private property and does not deprive a single owner of a single kopeck. This circumstance must be particularly stressed, for the bourgeois press continually "frightens" the small and middle-sized owners, telling them that the Socialists in general, the Bolsheviks in particular, wish to "expropriate" them—a notoriously false assertion, for *even after the complete Socialist revolu-*

tion the Socialists do not intend, cannot, and will not expropriate the small peasants. And we talk the whole time *only* of those immediate and urgent measures which have already been introduced in Western Europe, and which every more or less consistent democracy should have immediately introduced in our country for the struggle against the impending and unavoidable catastrophe.

The unification into associations of the small and very small enterprises would meet with serious difficulties, both technical and cultural, due to the extremely small size of the enterprises, their technical primitiveness, the illiterate or uneducated state of the owners. But such enterprises could be excluded from the law (as pointed out above in our hypothetical example) and their non-unification or their belated unification could not create serious difficulties, for the role of the overwhelming majority of small enterprises in the sum total of production, as far as their importance for the national economy in general is concerned, is *negligible*, and besides, they are often, in one way or another, dependent upon the large-scale enterprises.

Decisive importance is attached only to the large-scale enterprises where technical and cultural means as well as forces for "unionisation" *are in existence;* what is lacking to put these forces and means into operation is only a firm, decisive initiative of *revolutionary* power, mercilessly severe with the exploiters.

The poorer a country is in technically educated and intelligent forces in general, the more *urgent* it is as quickly and as decisively as possible to decree compulsory unification and to begin introducing it with the large and very large enterprises. For it is such a unification that will *conserve* intelligent forces, that will allow full utilisation and correct distribution of them. If even the Russian peasantry in its remote villages, working under the tsarist government, against a thousand odds created by it, was able, after 1905, to make a gigantic stride forward in the work of creating all sorts of associations, then it is obvious that the unification of large-scale and medium-sized industry and commerce could be introduced in a few months, if not sooner, provided this were urged by a really revolutionary-democratic government, based on the aid, participation, interestedness, and advantages of the "lower estates," the democracy, the office and factory workers, and appealing to them to exercise control.

The war has compelled all the belligerent and many of the neutral countries to introduce the regulation of consumption. The bread card made its appearance, became a customary phenomenon, and was followed by other cards. Russia did not remain untouched, but also introduced bread cards.

But it seems that just by this example we can furnish the best comparison between the reactionary-bureaucratic methods of fighting the catastrophe, methods striving to confine themselves to a minimum of reforms, and the revolutionary-democratic methods, which to deserve their name must make it their immediate task to break forcibly with the obsolete old and to accelerate as far as possible the movement forward.

The bread card, this typical sample of regulated consumption in the modern capitalist states, has as its aim and (at best) realises one thing: it distributes the existing food reserve in a manner to make it suffice for all. A minimum consumption is introduced not for all, but for the "staple" products. And this is all. Nothing more is cared for. The existing food reserves are bureaucratically taken stock of, divided by the number of persons; then a norm is established and introduced, and this is all. Articles of luxury are not touched because they are scarce "anyway," and they are "anyway" so expensive that they are inaccessible to the "people." This is why in *all* the belligerent countries without exception, even in Germany, which without risking contradiction may be considered an example of the most exact, most pedantic, most rigid regulation of consumption, even in Germany we observe how the rich constantly *evade* "norms" of consumption. This is also known to "everybody"; everybody speaks of this with a smirk, and in the German Socialist press and sometimes even in the bourgeois press, one can always find, notwithstanding the fierceness of the rigorous German censorship, notes and comment on the "menu" of the rich, on how they get white bread in unlimited quantities in some watering place or other (frequented by all who have the money to do so under the pretext of being sick), on the substitution by the rich of exquisite and rare articles of luxury for products used by the common people.

The reactionary capitalist state which is *afraid* of undermining the foundations of capitalism, the foundations of wage slavery, the foundations of the economic mastery of the rich, is *afraid* of devel-

oping the initiative of the workers and the toilers in general; it is *afraid* to "incite" them to demand more and more; *such* a state needs nothing but bread cards. Such a state does not lose sight for a moment, not at a single step, of the reactionary aim of strengthening capitalism, of not allowing it to be undermined, of limiting the "regulation of economic life" in general, the regulation of consumption in particular, to such measures as are absolutely necessary in order to be able to feed the people, without in the least degree *attempting* actually to regulate consumption in the sense of *control over the rich,* in the sense of imposing on those people who are better situated, privileged, sated, and over-fed in peace time, *greater* burdens in time of war.

The reactionary-bureaucratic solution of the problem put before the people by the war, is limited to the bread card, to equal distribution of the "common" products absolutely necessary for feeding the people, without deviating one iota from bureaucracy and reactionary policy, that is, from the aim: self-reliant activity on the part of the poor, the proletariat, the masses of the people (the *demos*), of not allowing any loopholes for the rich to gorge themselves with articles of luxury. And in *all* countries, we repeat, even in Germany—not to speak of Russia—a large number of loopholes are left, for the "common people" are starving while the rich frequent watering places, supplementing the meagre governmental ration by all sorts of "additional products" on the side and *not* allowing *themselves* to be controlled.

In Russia, which has just brought about a revolution against tsarism in the name of freedom and equality; in Russia, which has become at once a democratic republic as far as its actual political institutions are concerned, the ease with which the "bread cards" are evaded by the rich in a manner obvious to *all*, particularly strikes the eye of the people, particularly arouses discontent, irritation, anger, and indignation on the part of the masses. And this ease is particularly great. In a "clandestine" way, and for particularly high prices, especially when you have "*connections*" (which only the rich have), everything can be gotten in large quantities. The people are starving. Regulation of consumption is confined to very narrow bureaucratic reactionary limits. Not a shadow of consideration, not a shadow of care on the part of the government to place this regulation on a really revolutionary-democratic basis.

The queues are an evil from which "everybody" suffers, but...

the rich send their servants to stand in line, and they even hire special help for this purpose! Here is democracy for you!

During the extraordinary sufferings the country is going through, and in order to fight the impending catastrophe, a revolutionary-democratic policy would not confine itself to bread cards, but would add, first, compulsory organisation of the population into consumers' societies, for without such an organisation it is impossible fully to introduce control over consumption; secondly, it would introduce the labour duty for the rich with the proviso that they must provide these consumers' societies with secretarial and other labour free of charge; thirdly, it would introduce among the population equal distribution of all articles of consumption without exception, so that the burdens of the war may really be equally distributed; fourthly, it would introduce such organisation of control that the consumption of the rich would be controlled by the poor classes of the population.

The introduction of real democracy in this realm, the manifestation of the real revolutionary spirit in the organisation of control on the part of the neediest classes of the people, would serve as a great stimulus towards straining every available intelligent force, towards developing the really revolutionary energy of the whole people. At present the Ministers of republican and revolutionary-democratic Russia, exactly like their brethren in all the other imperialist countries, use fine phrases about "labour for the benefit of the people," about "straining all efforts," but the people themselves sense, see, and feel the hypocrisy of these words.

The result is marking time, while economic deterioration spreads unchecked, and a catastrophe is approaching. For on the one hand, our government cannot introduce military prison labour for the workers, after the pattern of Kornilov, Hindenburg, and the imperialists, due to the fact that the traditions, memories, traces, habits, and institutions of the *revolution* are still too fresh in the mind of the people; on the other hand, it cannot take really earnest steps on the revolutionary-democratic road, for it is soaked through with, and entangled from top to bottom in, the relations of dependence upon the bourgeoisie, of a "coalition" with it, and with the fear of infringing upon its real privileges.

The Destruction of the Work of Democratic Organisations by the Government

We have reviewed the various means and methods of fighting the catastrophe and the famine. We have seen everywhere the irreconcilable contradictions existing between democracy, on the one hand, and the government, as well as the bloc of S.-R.'s and Mensheviks who support it, on the other. To prove that these contradictions exist in reality, and not only in our exposition, and that the impossibility of harmonising them is *actually* proven by conflicts of nation-wide importance, it suffices to recall two particularly typical "results" and lessons of the half year's history of our revolution.

The history of Palchinsky's "reign" is one lesson. The history of Peshekhonov's "reign" and fall is another lesson.*

The measures described above of fighting the catastrophe and the famine reduce themselves in reality to thorough encouragement (up to compulsion) of "unionising" the population, and in the first place the democracy, *i.e.*, the majority of the population; that is, in the first place, the oppressed classes, the workers and peasants, especially the poorest peasants. This path was spontaneously taken by the population itself, for the purpose of fighting the extraordinary difficulties, burdens, and miseries of the war.

Tsarism thwarted the independent and free "unionisation" of the population in every possible way. After the fall of the tsarist monarchy, democratic organisations began to spring up and grow rapidly all over Russia. The struggle against the catastrophe began to be waged by independently arising democratic organisations—committees of supplies of all sorts, food committees, fuel conferences, and so on and so forth.

Now the most remarkable thing in the half year's history of our revolution, as far as the question under consideration is concerned, is the fact that the *government* which calls itself republican and revolutionary, the government *supported* by the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s in the name of the "plenipotentiary organs of revolutionary democracy," *has fought against* the democratic organisations and has *suppressed them!!!*

By this struggle, Palchinsky acquired a sad notoriety which is widespread throughout Russia. He acted behind the back of the

* Former Ministers of Commerce and Industry, and Supplies, respectively.—*Ed.*

government without openly appearing before the people (in the very same way as the Cadets generally preferred to act when they willingly put forward Tsereteli "for the people's sake," while they themselves manipulated all the important affairs on the quiet). Palchinsky thwarted and destroyed every serious measure on the part of the spontaneous democratic organisations. For not a single serious measure could go through without a "dent" in the immense profits and the self-willed rule of the Kit Kityches. And Palchinsky was a devoted defender and servant of the Kit Kityches. It went so far—and the fact was published in the papers—that Palchinsky directly cancelled the orders of the spontaneous democratic organisations!

The whole history of Palchinsky's "reign"—he "reigned" for many months, just at the time when Tsereteli, Skobelev, and Chernov were "Ministers"—is one continuous, hideous scandal; it is a violation of the will of the people, of the decisions of democracy, in favour of the capitalists, for the sake of their filthy greed. Only an insignificant fraction of Palchinsky's "exploits" could naturally appear in the papers; a full investigation of how he *hindered* the struggle against famine only a truly democratic government of the proletariat will succeed in carrying out when it will have conquered power and brought Palchinsky and his ilk before the people's court, without concealing the matter.

One may perhaps argue that Palchinsky after all was an exception and was removed. The trouble is that Palchinsky is not an exception but the *rule;* that with the removal of Palchinsky the situation has not improved one whit; that his place has been taken by similar Palchinskys bearing other names; that all the "*influence*" of the capitalists, all the policies of *hindering the struggle against famine to please the capitalists,* have remained intact. For Kerensky and Co. are nothing but a screen to shield the interests of the capitalists. The most striking proof of this is the resignation from the cabinet of Peshekhonov, the Minister of Supplies. It is well known that Peshekhonov is a very, very moderate Narodnik.* Still he wished to work conscientiously in organising supplies, he wished to work in conjunction with the democratic organisations, and basing himself on them. The *experience* of Peshekhonov's work and his *resignation* are the more interesting, since this most moderate Narodnik, a member of the "People's Socialist" Party, a man ready to enter

* Populist.—*Ed.*

into any kind of compromises with the bourgeoisie, was finally compelled to leave! For Kerensky's government, to please the capitalist landowners and kulaks, actually *raised* the fixed prices on grain!

This is how Mr. Smith describes this "step" and its meaning in the paper *Svobodnaya Zhizn,* September 15, No. 1.

A few days before the government adopted the measure of raising the fixed prices, this is what happened in the national supply committee. Rolovich, a representative of the Right, a stubborn defender of the interests of private trade and an uncompromising enemy of the grain monopoly and state interference in economic life, stated with a self-satisfied smile that according to his information the fixed prices on grain would soon be raised.

On the other hand, the representative of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, in reply, declared that he knew nothing of the kind, that as long as the revolution existed in Russia such a thing would not take place, that at any rate, the government could not take such a step without conferring with the plenipotentiary organs of democracy, the Economic Council and the National Supply Committee. This declaration was seconded by the representative of the Soviet of Peasant Deputies.

Alas, reality has furnished a cruel amendment to this controversy. Not the representatives of democracy but the representative of the propertied elements proved to be right. The latter proved excellently informed concerning the contemplated attempt on the rights of democracy, although its representatives indignantly denied the very possibility of such an attempt.

Thus the representative of the workers and the representative of the peasantry both definitely make known their opinion in the name of a gigantic majority of the people—and still Kerensky's government acts the other way, in the interests of the capitalists!

Rolovich, a representative of the capitalists, proved excellently informed behind the back of democracy. This is in keeping with what we have always observed and observe now—that the bourgeois papers, the *Ryech* and the *Birzhevka,* are best informed about what is going on in Kerensky's cabinet.

What does this remarkable possession of information indicate? Clearly it indicates that the capitalists have their own "avenues" and that they *actually* hold power in their hands. Kerensky is a figure-head which they put forward wherever and whenever it suits them. The interests of tens of millions of workers and peasants prove to be sacrificed to the profits of a handful of the rich.

What do our S.-R.'s and Mensheviks say to this revolting mockery of the people? Would they perhaps address the workers and the peasants with an appeal saying that after this the only place for Kerensky and his colleagues is in jail?

God forbid. The S.-R.'s and Mensheviks, acting through the

"Economic Section" which belongs to them, confined themselves to a stern resolution, which we have already mentioned! In this resolution they declared that the raising of the grain prices by Kerensky's government was a "*pernicious* measure which aimed the *greatest blow* both at the work of supply and at the whole economic life of the country," and that those pernicious measures were adopted in direct "*violation*" of the law!

Such are the results of a policy of compromise, a policy of flirting with Kerensky and of wishing to "spare" him!

The government violates the law to please the rich, the landowners, and capitalists, adopting a measure which *ruins* all the work of control, of furnishing supplies and of salvaging the extremely shaky finances, while the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks continue to talk about an understanding with the commercial and industrial circles, while they continue to attend conferences with Tereshchenko, to spare Kerensky and to confine themselves to paper resolutions of protest which the government very calmly pigeon-holes!

This is where the truth of the fact that the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks have betrayed the cause of the people and the revolution, and that the Bolsheviks have become the real leaders of the masses, *even* of the S.-R. and Menshevik masses, is revealed in the most striking manner.

For it is the conquest of power by the proletariat, with the party of the Bolsheviks at its head, that alone would be capable of putting an end to the mischief done by Kerensky and Co., and of restoring the work of the democratic organisations of supply, etc., which Kerensky and his government are *ruining*.

The Bolsheviks come forward—as may be seen with absolute clarity in the above example—as the representatives of the interests of the *whole* people, the interests of securing the work of supply, the interests of satisfying the most urgent needs of the workers *and the peasants,* despite the vacillating, undecided, truly traitorous policy of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks, a policy that has brought the country to shame, such as this rise in the price of grain!

Financial Collapse and Measures Against It

The question of the rise in the fixed price of grain has yet another side to it. This rise means a new chaotic increase in the issue of paper money, a new step forward in the process of increasing the high cost of living, increasing the financial disorganisation, and

bringing nearer a financial collapse. Everybody recognises that the issue of paper money is the worst kind of a compulsory loan, that it worsens the conditions principally of the workers, of the poorest section of the population, that it is the chief evil in the financial confusion.

And it is this measure that Kerensky's government, supported by the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks, resorts to!

There is no other way of earnestly fighting the financial disorganisation and the inevitable financial collapse than a revolutionary rupture with the interests of capital and organisation of really democratic control, *i.e.*, control "from below," control of the workers and the poorest peasants *over* the capitalists—that way which all our preceding analysis deals with.

The unlimited issue of paper money encourages speculation, allows the capitalists to make millions, and places tremendous obstacles in the path of the much-needed expansion of production; for the dearth of materials, machines, etc., grows and progresses by leaps and bounds. How can matters be improved when the riches acquired by the rich through speculation are being concealed?

An income tax with progressive and very high rates for large and extra-large incomes, may be introduced. Our government, following the other imperialist governments, has introduced this tax. But to a considerable extent it remains a fiction, a dead letter, for, in the first place, the value of money is sinking faster and faster; secondly, the concealment of incomes is the more general the more their source is speculation and the more the preservation of commercial secrets is safeguarded.

To make the tax real and not fictitious, real control and not one on paper is required. Control over the capitalists, however, is impossible if it remains bureaucratic, for the bureaucracy itself is connected and intertwined with the bourgeoisie by thousands of threads. This is why in the Western European imperialist states, whether monarchies or republics, financial stability is achieved only at the price of introducing "labour duty" which creates for the workers *military penal labour* or *military slavery*.

Reactionary bureaucratic control—this is the only means known to the imperialist states, the democratic republics of France and America not excluded; this is how they shift the burdens of the war onto the proletariat and the labouring masses in general.

The fundamental contradiction of our governmental policy is that

in order not to quarrel with the bourgeoisie, not to destroy the "coalition" with it, it is compelled to introduce reactionary-bureaucratic control, calling it "revolutionary-democratic," deceiving the people at every step, irritating and embittering the masses who have just overthrown tsarism.

Still, it is precisely revolutionary-democratic measures, in combining into unions the oppressed classes, the workers and peasants, the masses in general, that would make it possibe to establish most effective control *over the rich,* and to fight most successfully against the concealment of incomes.

The circulation of checks is being encouraged to combat the excessive issue of paper money. To the poor this measure is of no consequence, since the poor population lives from hand to mouth anyway, completing its "business turnover" within one week, and thus returning to the capitalists the meagre pittance which it manages to earn. As far as the rich are concerned, the circulation of checks would be of enormous importance, for it would allow the state, especially in connection with such measures as the reorganisation of the banks and the abolition of commercial secrets, *really* to control the incomes of the capitalists, really to tax them, really to "democratise" (and at the same time to stabilise) the financial system.

But here the fear of touching upon the privileges of the bourgeoisie, of breaking the "coalition" with it, is an obstacle. For without really revolutionary measures, without the most grave compulsion, the capitalists will not submit to any control, they will not make known their budgets, nor will they put their reserves of paper money "in the care" of the democratic state.

In nationalising the banks, in making the circulation of checks compulsory by law for all the rich, in abolishing commercial secrets, in introducing the confiscation of property for concealing incomes, etc., the workers and peasants, organised in unions, could most easily render control both effective and universal, *i.e.,* control over the rich, control which would *return to the treasury* the paper money issued by it, by taking it away *from those* who have it, *from those* who conceal it.

For this purpose a revolutionary dictatorship of the democracy headed by the revolutionary proletariat is necessary, *i.e.,* for this purpose democracy must become revolutionary *in deeds.*

This is the whole crux of the matter. This is what our S.R.'s

and Mensheviks do not wish to have when they deceive the people by the flag of revolutionary democracy, and when they in reality support the reactionary-bureaucratic policy of the bourgeoisie, which is guided, now as ever, by the principle of *après nous le déluge*—after us, the deluge.

Ordinarily we do not even notice how deeply ingrained in us are the anti-democratic habits and prejudices concerning the "sacredness" of bourgeois property. When an engineer or a banker publishes information concerning the income and expenditures of a worker, when he publishes data concerning his earnings and the productivity of labour, this is considered perfectly legitimate and just. Nobody undertakes to discover here an attempt on the "private life" of the workers, "spying" or "informing" on the part of the engineer. Labour and the earnings of the hired workers are looked upon as an open book which every bourgeois may look into, using it to expose the "extravagance" of the worker, his alleged "laziness," etc.

But what about the reverse? What if the unions of office workers, clerks and *domestic* servants were to be invited by the *democratic* state to go over the records of income and expenditure of the capitalists, to publish data concerning these items, to aid the government in fighting against the concealment of incomes?

What a savage howl the bourgeosie would then raise against "snooping," against "informing"! When the "masters" control the domestics, when the capitalists control the workers, it is considered quite the ordinary thing; the private life of the toilers and exploited is *not* considered inviolate; the bourgeoisie has a right to call to account every "wage slave," to discuss his income and expenditures. But the attempt on the part of the oppressed to control the oppressor, to reveal *his* expenditures and incomes, to disclose *his* extravagances, even during the war when this extravagance is the direct cause of famine and of the destruction of armies at the front—oh, no, then the bourgeoisie will not allow any "snooping" or "informing"!

The question still reduces itself to this: the rule of the bourgeoisie is *incompatible* with true democracy that is truly revolutionary. It is impossible to be a revolutionary democrat in the twentieth century and in a capitalist country *if one is afraid* to march towards Socialism.

Is It Possible to Go Forward While Being Afraid of Socialism?

The reader impressed with the current opportunist ideas of the S.-R.'s and the Mensheviks may raise the following objection to the preceding argument: are not most of the measures here described in essence not democratic, but *definitely* Socialist measures?

This current argument, usually to be met in one or the other form in the bourgeois, S.-R. and Menshevik press, is a reactionary defence of backward capitalism, a Struve-like, masked defence. It amounts to saying that we are not yet ripe for Socialism, that it is early to "introduce" Socialism, that our revolution is a bourgeois one, that therefore we must be servants of the bourgeoisie (although the great bourgeois revolutionists of France made their revolution of one hundred and twenty-five years ago great by means of *terror* against all oppressors and against the landowners and capitalists!).

The mock-Marxists who are in the service of the bourgeoisie and who have been joined by the S.-R.'s, in arguing this way fail to understand (if we examine the theoretical foundations of their opinions) what imperialism is, what capitalist monopoly is, what the state is, and what revolutionary democracy is. For, once this is understood, it is impossible not to admit that no progress is possible without marching toward Socialism.

Everybody talks about imperialism. But imperialism is nothing but monopoly capitalism.

That in Russia, too, capitalism has become monopoly capitalism is eloquently confirmed by the coal trust, metal trust, sugar syndicate, etc. The same sugar syndicate shows clearly how monopoly capitalism develops into state monopoly capitalism.

And what is the state? It is the organisation of the ruling class; in Germany, for instance, the Junkers and capitalists. That is why the measure called "war Socialism" by the German Plekhanovs (Scheidemann, Lensch, and others) is in reality war-time state monopoly capitalism. Or to speak more plainly and clearly, it is military penal labour for the workers, military defence of the capitalists' profits.

But try and substitute for the Junker-capitalist, for the landowner-capitalist state, a *revolutionary democratic* state, *i.e.*, such as would destroy *all* privileges in a revolutionary way without being afraid of introducing in a revolutionary way the fullest possible democracy

—and you shall see that in a truly revolutionary-democratic state, state monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably means progress towards Socialism.

For, once a large-scale capitalist enterprise becomes a monopoly, this means that it serves the entire people. Once it has become state monopoly, this means that the state (*i.e.*, the armed organisation of the population, primarily of the workers and the peasants, assuming there is a really *revolutionary* democracy) directs the entire enterprise—in whose interests?

Either in the interests of the landowners and capitalists; then we have not a revolutionary democratic but a reactionary bureaucratic state, an imperialist republic; or in the interests of revolutionary democracy; then *this is in reality a step towards Socialism.*

For Socialism is nothing but the next step forward from state capitalist monopoly. In other words, Socialism is nothing but state capitalist monopoly *made to benefit the whole people;* by this token it *ceases* to be capitalist monopoly.

There is no middle course here. The objective course of development is such that it is *impossible* to go ahead from monopolies (whose number, role and importance have been increased tenfold by the war) without moving towards Socialism.

Either you are a revolutionary-democrat in deeds—and then you do not have to be afraid of steps leading towards Socialism—or you are afraid of steps leading towards Socialism, you are denouncing them Plekhanov-fashion, by Dan arguments, by Chernov arguments, saying that our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, that it is impossible to "introduce" Socialism, etc.—then we must unavoidably sink to the level of Kerensky, Milyukov, Kornilov, *i.e.*, to the position of suppressing in a *reactionary-bureaucratic* manner the revolutionary-democratic tendencies of the workers and the peasant masses.

There is no middle course.

And therein lies the fundamental contradiction of our revolution.

It is impossible to stand still in history generally, in war times particularly. One must go either forward or backward. It is impossible to go forward in the Russia of the twentieth century, a Russia that has won a republic and a democracy in a revolutionary way, without *going* towards Socialism, without taking *steps* towards it (steps determined and circumscribed by the level of technique and culture, for large-scale machine economy cannot be "intro-

duced" into peasant agriculture, and it cannot be abolished in the sugar industry). And if you are afraid to go forward, that means you are going backward, which is exactly what the Kerenskys are doing, to the delight of the Milyukovs and Plekhanovs and with the foolish aid of the Tseretelis and the Chernovs.

The dialectics of history are such that the war, having accelerated the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism, has *by the same token* brought humanity immeasurably closer to Socialism.

The imperialist war is the eve of the Socialist revolution. And this is so not only because the war with its horrors is generating a proletarian uprising—no uprising will create Socialism if it has not ripened economically—but because state monopoly capitalism is the fullest *material* preparation for Socialism, is its threshold, is that rung on the historic ladder between which rung and the one called Socialism *there are no intermediate rungs.*

Our S.-R.'s and Mensheviks approach the question of Socialism in a doctrinaire fashion; they approach it from the angle of a once memorised and badly digested doctrine. They regard Socialism as something far away, unknown, some hazy future.

In reality Socialism looks at us now through all the windows of present-day capitalism; the outline of Socialism appears before us *in practice;* it emerges from every large-scale measure forming a step forward on the basis of this modern capitalism.

What is universal labour duty?

It is a step forward on the basis of modern monopoly capitalism, a step towards regulating the economic life as a whole according to a certain general plan; it is a step towards saving the labour of the people, towards preventing its senseless waste by capitalism.

In Germany the Junkers (landowners) and capitalists are introducing universal labour duty, which inevitably becomes military penal labour for the workers.

Take, however, the same institution and analyse its meaning under the revolutionary democratic state. Universal labour duty, introduced, regulated, and directed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies is *not yet* Socialism, but it is *no longer* capitalism. It is a tremendous *step* towards Socialism, a step from which, if complete democracy is retained, no backward step towards

capitalism would be possible without the most atrocious violence perpetrated upon the masses.

THE WAR AND THE FIGHT AGAINST ECONOMIC RUIN

The question of measures to fight the approaching catastrophe makes it necessary to throw light on another most important question, namely, the question of the connection between internal and foreign politics, or, in other words, the interrelation between an imperialist war of conquest and a revolutionary, proletarian war, between a criminally predatory and a justly democratic war.

All the above measures of fighting the catastrophe would, as we have already pointed out, immeasurably strengthen the defensive power, or, in other words, the military strength of the country. This on the one hand. On the other hand, these measures cannot be introduced without transforming the predatory war into a just war, without transforming the war waged by the capitalists in the interests of the capitalists into a war waged by the proletariat in the interests of all the toilers and exploited.

The nationalisation of banks and syndicates, coupled with the abolition of commercial secrets and with the workers' control over the capitalists, would in fact mean not only a gigantic saving of the people's labour, a possibility of economising forces and resources, it would also mean an improvement in the situation of the labouring *masses* of the population, of its majority. It is well known that in modern wars economic organisation is of decisive importance. There is plenty of bread, coal, naphtha, iron in Russia. In this respect our situation is better than that of any of the belligerent European countries. In fighting against economic ruin by the means indicated above, by attracting to this struggle the initiative of the masses from below, by improving their conditions, by introducing the nationalisation of the banks and the syndicates, Russia would utilise its revolution and its democracy to raise the entire country to an immeasurably higher stage of economic organisation.

If the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks, instead of a "coalition" with the bourgeoisie which hampers all the measures of control and sabotages production, had brought about in April the passing of power to the Soviets, and if they had directed all their forces not to ministerial leap-frog, not to wearing out holes, side by side with the Cadets, in their Ministers' and Assistant Ministers' chairs, etc., etc., but to directing the workers and peasants in *their* control *over* the capital-

ists, in their *war against* the capitalists, Russia would now be a country fully reorganised economically, with the land in the hands of the peasants, with banks nationalised, that is, it would be *in this respect* (and these are the most important economic bases of modern life) *superior* to all the other capitalist countries.

When the banks are nationalised, the defensive strength, the military strength of a country is greater than when the banks remain in private hands. When the land is in the hands of peasant committees, the military strength of a peasant country is *greater* than that of a country where the land is in the hands of landowners.

The heroic patriotism and the marvels of military valour of the French in 1792-1793 are repeatedly cited. But the material, the economic conditions of that historic period, which alone made these marvels possible, are forgotten. Real revolutionary action against obsolete feudalism, the passing of all the country, with a swiftness, a decisiveness, a vigour, a determination that are truly revolutionary and democratic, to a higher method of production, to free peasant landownership—those were the material, the economic conditions that saved France with "marvellous" rapidity by *regenerating, rejuvenating* its economic basis.

The example of France tells us one thing and one only: to make Russia capable of defending herself, to achieve "marvels" of mass heroism here, all the old must be swept away with "Jacobin" ruthlessness. Russia must be rejuvenated, regenerated *economically*. And this cannot be done in the twentieth century by merely sweeping away tsarism (France did not confine itself to this one hundred and twenty-five years ago). This cannot be done even by merely abolishing landowners' property in land in a revolutionary way (we have not accomplished even that, for the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks have betrayed the peasantry), by merely giving over the land to the peasantry. For we are living in the twentieth century, and power over the land *without power over the banks* is not capable of regenerating, rejuvenating the life of the people.

The material, the economic regeneration of France by the end of the eighteenth century was combined with political and spiritual regeneration, with a dictatorship of the revolutionary democracy and revolutionary proletariat (from which democracy had not separated itself and which was as yet almost amalgamated with it), with a merciless war waged against everything reactionary. All the people, and particularly the masses, *i.e.*, the oppressed classes, were seized

with a boundless revolutionary enthusiasm; *everybody* considered the war a just defensive war, and *it really was.* Revolutionary France defended itself against reactionary-monarchist Europe. Not in 1792-1793, but many years later, *after* the triumphant reaction within the country, the counter-revolutionary dictatorship of Napoleon transformed the wars waged by France from defensive wars to wars of conquest.

And in Russia? We are continuing to wage an imperialist war, in the interests of the capitalists, in alliance with the imperialists, in conformity with the secret treaties which the Tsar concluded with the capitalists of England, etc., and in which he promised the Russian capitalists to rob foreign countries, Constantinople, Lemberg, Armenia, and so forth.

The war remains an unjust, reactionary war, a war of conquest on the part of Russia as long as it has not offered a just peace and has not broken with imperialism. The social character of the war, its real meaning, is determined not by the location of the enemy troops (as the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks think, sinking to the vulgar conceptions of an unenlightened peasant). This character is determined by the policy which the war pursues ("war is a continuation of politics"), by the class that wages the war and the aims it pursues.

It is impossible to lead the masses into a robbers' war in accordance with secret treaties and still expect them to show enthusiasm. The foremost class of revolutionary Russia, the proletariat, realises ever more clearly the criminal character of the war, while the bourgeoisie not only has failed to shatter this conviction of the masses, but on the contrary, the consciousness of the criminal character of the war is growing. The proletariat of *both capitals* of Russia has become definitely internationalist. How can any one talk about mass enthusiasm here in favour of the war?

One thing is inseparably bound up with the other: internal politics with foreign politics. It is impossible to render the country capable of defending itself without the greatest heroism on the part of the people in courageously and decisively carrying out great economic transformations. And it is impossible to appeal to the heroism of the masses without breaking with imperialism, without offering to all the peoples a democratic peace, without thus transforming the war from a war of conquest, a predatory, criminal war, into a just, defensive, revolutionary war.

Only a decisively consistent break with the capitalists both in internal and foreign politics can save our revolution and our country, held in the iron grasp of imperialism.

Revolutionary Democracy and the Revolutionary Proletariat

To be really revolutionary, the democracy of present-day Russia must march in full unity with the proletariat, supporting its struggle as that of the only class that is thoroughly and consistently revolutionary.

This is the conclusion following from an analysis of the question as to the means of fighting the catastrophe which is as unavoidable as it is unprecedented in size.

But the war has brought about such an immense crisis, it has so strained the material and moral forces of the people, it has dealt such blows to the entire modern social organisation, that humanity is confronted with the alternative of either perishing or entrusting its fate to the most revolutionary class for the purpose of passing most speedily and in the most radical way to a higher method of production.

Due to a number of historic causes: the greater backwardness of Russia, the particular difficulties the country has encountered in the war, the great rottenness of tsarism, the extraordinarily vivid traditions of 1905, the revolution broke out in Russia sooner than in other countries. Due to the revolution, Russia, in its *political* structure, has caught up with the advanced countries in the course of a few months.

But this is not enough. War is implacable; it puts the question with merciless sharpness: either overtake the advanced countries and surpass them *also economically*, or perish.

It is possible to do this, for we have before us the experiences of a great number of advanced countries; we have available the results of their technique and culture. The growing protest against the war in Europe, the atmosphere of the rising world revolution of the workers, give us moral support. We are being forced, lashed into action by a revolutionary-democratic freedom that is unusually rare during an imperialist war.

Either full steam ahead, or perish. This is how history has put the question.

The attitude of the proletariat towards the peasantry at such a

moment only confirms, while correspondingly modifying it, the old Bolshevik position that it is necessary to wrest the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeoisie. Here alone is the guarantee of saving the revolution.

But the peasantry is numerically the strongest representative of the whole petty-bourgeois mass.

Our S.-R.'s and Mensheviks have assumed a reactionary role: they wish to keep the peasantry under the influence of the bourgeoisie, to lead the peasantry to a coalition with the bourgeoisie and not with the proletariat.

The experience of the revolution teaches the masses rapidly. Accordingly, the reactionary policy of the S.-R.'s and the Mensheviks is suffering a collapse: they are beaten in the Soviets of both capitals. The "Left" opposition is growing in both petty-bourgeois democratic parties. The city conference of the S.-R.'s in Petrograd yielded, September 23, 1917, a two-thirds majority to the *Left* S.-R.'s, who tend towards a union with the proletariat and reject a union (coalition) with the bourgeoisie.

The S.-R.'s and Mensheviks keep repeating the bourgeoisie's favourite contradistinction: bourgeoisie and democracy. Such a contradistinction is just as senseless as comparing pounds with yards.

There is a democratic bourgeoisie, and there is a bourgeois democracy; only complete ignorance both of history and political economy can deny that.

The S.-R.'s and Mensheviks needed the incorrect contradistinction to *conceal* the undeniable fact that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat stands the *petty bourgeoisie.* This petty bourgeoisie, in consequence of its economic class position, vacillates between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The S.-R.'s and Mensheviks try to draw the petty bourgeoisie into a union with the bourgeoisie. This is the substance of all their "coalitions," of the whole coalition cabinet, of all the policies of Kerensky, that typical semi-Cadet. After a half year of revolution, this policy has suffered complete collapse.

The Cadets are full of malicious glee: the revolution, they say, has suffered collapse; the revolution has *not* been able to cope either with the war or with the economic ruin.

This is not true. It is the *Cadets*, the *S.-R.'s* and the *Mensheviks* who have suffered collapse, for it is this bloc that has ruled Russia

for half a year, only to increase the economic ruin, to entangle and render more difficult the military situation.

The more complete the collapse of the *union* of the bourgeoisie with the *S.-R.'s and Mensheviks,* the sooner will the people *learn their lesson,* the easier will they find the *correct* way out: a union of the poorest peasantry, *i.e.,* the majority of the peasantry, with the proletariat.

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UNAVOIDABLE CATASTROPHE AND BOUNDLESS PROMISES

I

THE question of imminent economic ruin, of a gigantic, unheard-of catastrophe, is so important that we must dwell on it more and more if we want to understand it fully. In the last issue of the *Pravda* we already pointed out that the *programme* of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies cannot at present be distinguished *in any way* from the programme of "terrible" Bolshevism.

To-day we must point out that the programme of the Menshevik Minister Skobelev goes one step beyond Bolshevism. Here is the programme as reported in the ministerial paper, the *Ryech:*

> Minister (Skobelev) declares that . . . our state economy is on the brink of a precipice. We must intervene in the various domains of the economic life of the country, for there is no money in our treasury. We must better the living conditions of the toiling masses, and to do this we must take away the profits from the treasuries of the business men and the bankers. (*Voice in the audience:* "By what method?") By ruthless taxation of property, replies the Minister of Labour Skobelev. This method is known to the science of finance. The rate of taxation must be increased for the propertied classes to one hundred per cent of their profits. (*Voice in the audience:* "This means everything.") Unfortunately, declares Skobelev, many corporations have already distributed their dividends among their shareholders, that is why we must levy a progressive personal tax on the propertied classes. We will go even further. If capital wishes to preserve the bourgeois method of doing business, then let it work without interest, so as not to lose the clients. . . . We must introduce obligatory labour duty for the shareholders, bankers, and factory owners, who have been in a lackadaisical mood ever since the incentives that had once stimulated them to work have disappeared. . . . We must force the gentlemen-shareholders to submit to the state; they, too, must be subject to labour duty.

We urge the workers to read and re-read this programme, to discuss and try to grasp the conditions prerequisite for its realisation.

The main things are the conditions for its realisation, the immediate efforts toward its realisation.

This programme in itself is not only excellent and in accord with our Bolshevik programme, but in one particular, *i. e.*, in the matter

of "taking away the profits from the treasuries of the bankers" to the extent of "100 per cent," it even goes a step further than we do.

Our party is more moderate. In its resolution it demands much less, namely, the instituting of control over the banks and the "gradual" (Hear! hear! the Bolsheviks are in favour of gradualness) "transition to a more just and progressive tax on incomes and property."

Our party is more moderate than Skobelev.

Skobelev hands out immoderate, nay, boundless promises, without understanding the conditions which would render their practical realisation possible.

This is the crux of the matter.

To think of actually realising the programme proposed by Skobelev is absurd, since not even one serious effort toward its realisation can be made either through the ten Ministers of the landowners and the capitalists or through the bureaucratic, official-ridden machine to which the government of the capitalists (plus a few Mensheviks and Narodniks) is perforce limited.

Fewer promises, Citizen Skobelev, and more action. Fewer high-sounding phrases, and more understanding as to how to get down to business.

We can and must get down to business immediately without losing a day, in order to save the country from an otherwise unavoidable and gruesome disaster. The crux of the matter is that the "new" Provisional Government does not want to get down to business; and even if it wanted to it could not, for it is fettered by a thousand chains designed to safeguard the interests of capital.

We can and must, in one day, call upon the people to commence to work; in one day we can publish a decree which would immediately convoke the following:

1. Soviets and congresses of bank employees in individual banks as well as on a national scale; they are to be directed to work out at once practical measures for insuring the merger of all banking and credit establishments into one general state bank, and for establishing the most scrupulous control over all banking operations; the results of such control to be published forthwith;

2. Soviets and congresses of employees of all syndicates and trusts, with instructions to work out measures for control and accounting; the results of such control to be published forthwith;

3. This decree is to grant the right of control not only to all the

Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, but also to the Soviets of workers in every big factory, as well as to the representatives of every large political party (by a large party we mean, for example, a party that had on May 25 independent electoral tickets in not less than two Petrograd boroughs); all books, all documents to be open to such control;

4. The decree must call upon all shareholders, directors and members of the managing boards of all concerns to publish the names of all shareholders who own no less than 10,000 (or 5,000) rubles' worth of stocks; the various shares and the various companies in which the listed individuals are interest, to be indicated; incorrect statements (discovered through the control of banking and other employees) to be punished by the confiscation of the guilty party's entire property, and by imprisonment for not less than five years;

5. The decree must call upon the whole people to establish immediately, through the local organs of self-government, universal obligatory labour duty, for the control and realisation of which there must be established a universal people's militia (in the villages—directly; in the cities—through the workers' militia).

Without such universal, obligatory labour duty, the country cannot be saved from ruin. And without a people's militia, universal obligatory labour duty cannot be established. This can be grasped by any one who has not fallen into ministerial lunacy or been hypnotised into credulity by ministerial eloquence.

He who actually wants to save from ruin tens of millions of people, must come to the defence of such measures.

In the next article we will discuss gradual transition toward a more equitable tax, also the method whereby it may be possible to bring to the fore and gradually place in ministerial positions those really gifted organisers (from among the workers as well as from among the capitalists) who have manifested their ability in the kind of work described above.

II

When Skobelev, in a moment of ministerial abandon, threatened to deprive the capitalists of 100 per cent of their profits, he really offered us in that speech a sample of a phrase calculated to impress. It is just such phrases that are always used to deceive the people in bourgeois parliamentary republics.

But here we have something worse than a mere phrase. "If capital wishes to preserve the bourgeois method of doing business, then let it work without interest, so as not to lose the clients," says Skobelev. This sounds like a "terrible" threat directed at the capitalists; in point of fact, however, it is an attempt (unconscious, most likely, in the case of Skobelev, but conscious, no doubt, in the case of the capitalists) to preserve the all-powerful rule of capital by a temporary sacrifice of profits.

The workers are taking "too much"—reason the capitalists—let us shift to them all responsibility, without giving them either the power or the opportunity actually to manage all production. Let us, capitalists, sacrifice for a time our profits, but by preserving "the bourgeois method of doing business," by not losing "our clients," we shall hasten the fall of this intermediate stage in industry, we shall disorganise it in all kinds of ways, and we shall put the blame on the workers.

We have facts to prove that this is how the capitalists figure. The coal operators in the South are actually disorganising industry, are "deliberately neglecting and disorganising it" (see *Novaya Zhizn* for May 29, report of statements made by a workers' delegation). The picture is clear: The *Ryech* is lying brazenly when it puts the blame on the workers.

The coal operators are "deliberately disorganising industry"; and Skobelev is twittering in nightingale fashion that "if capital wishes to preserve the bourgeois method of doing business, then let it work without interest." The picture is clear.

It is to the advantage of the capitalists and the bureaucrats to make all kinds of "boundless promises," and thus to divert the attention of the people from the main thing, namely, from the transfer of actual control to the workers.

The workers must sweep aside all high-sounding phrases, promises, declarations, projects evolved in the centre by bureaucrats ready every minute to apply themselves to drawing up the most effective plans, regulations, statutes, rules. Down with all this lying! Down with all this fracas of bureaucratic and bourgeois project-mongering that has collapsed everywhere with a crash. Down with this habit of procrastination! The workers must demand the immediate establishment of actual control, to be exercised only by the workers themselves.

This is imperative for the success of the cause, the cause of avert-

ing a catastrophe. If this is lacking, the rest is sheer deception. Once we have this, we will not at all be in a hurry to take "100 per cent" of the capitalists' profits. We can and we must be more moderate, we must pass gradually to a more equitable tax; we shall differentiate between small and large shareholders, taking very little from the former, taking a great deal (but not necessarily everything) only from the latter. The number of large shareholders is insignificant; but the rôle they play and the wealth they possess are tremendous. It may be safely said that a list of five or even three thousand (or perhaps even one thousand) names of the richest men in Russia, or an insight (by means of control exercised from below by bank, syndicate, and other employees), into all the threads and ties of their finance capital, their banking connections, would expose the whole knot of capitalist domination, the main body of wealth accumulated at the expense of others' labour, all the really important sources of "control" over social production and distribution of goods.

It is this control that must be handed over to the workers. It is these ties, these sources, that the capitalist interests are eager to conceal from the people. Better forego for a time "all" our profits, or 99 per cent of our income, rather than disclose to the people these roots of our power—says the capitalist class and its unconscious servant, the government official.

Under no circumstances will we renounce our right and our demand that the chief fortress of finance capital be opened to the people, that just this fortress be placed under workers' control, say, and will say, the class-conscious workers. And every passing day will prove the soundness of this argument to ever greater masses of the poor, to an ever growing majority of the people, to an ever greater number of sincere men and women honestly seeking an escape from the impending disaster.

The chief fortress of finance capital must be seized. Unless this is done, all phrases, all projects of how to avert disaster are sheer deception. As to the individual capitalists, or even the majority of capitalists, not only does the proletariat not intend to "strip" them (as Shulgin has been "scaring" himself and his ilk), not only does it not intend to deprive them of "everything," but, on the contrary, it intends to place them at useful, honourable tasks, subject to the control of the workers themselves.

When unavoidable disaster is approaching, the most useful and

most indispensable task confronting the people is that of organisation. Marvels of proletarian organisation—this is our slogan at present, and shall become our slogan and our demand to an even greater extent, when the proletariat is in power. Without the organisation of the masses it is absolutely impossible either to introduce the needed universal obligatory labour duty, or to establish a relatively serious control over banks, syndicates, and the production and distribution of goods.

That is why it is necessary to begin, and begin immediately, with a workers' militia, in order that we may advance, firmly, efficiently, gradually, towards the establishment of a universal militia, towards the displacement of the standing army by a universal army of the people. That is why it is necessary to bring forward gifted organisers from all strata of society, from all classes, not excluding the capitalists, who *at present* have more of the required experience and more talented organisers. There are many such talents among the people. These forces lie dormant in the peasantry and the proletariat, for lack of application. They must be mobilised from below, by practical work, by efficiently eliminating waiting lines, by a skilful organisation of house committees, by organising the domestic servants, by creating model farms in the country, by putting on a sound basis the factories taken over by the workers, etc., etc. After we have brought these forces to the surface, into practice, after we have tested their ability in actual work, we can make them all into "Ministers"—not in the old sense, not in the sense of rewarding them with portfolios, but in the sense of appointing them as instructors of the people, travelling organisers, assistants in the work of establishing everywhere the strictest order, the greatest economy in human labour, the strictest comradely discipline.

This is what the party of the proletariat must preach to the people as a means to avert a catastrophe. This is what it must partly begin to do now, in those localities where it is gaining power. This is what it must carry out fully when it becomes the state power.

Pravda, Nos. 58 and 59, May 29 and 30, 1917.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR

THEY ARE TRYING TO FRIGHTEN US WITH CIVIL WAR

FRIGHTENED by the fact that the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have refused to join a coalition with the Cadets, that perhaps democracy will be perfectly able to form a government without them and to govern Russia against them, the bourgeoisie is doing everything possible to intimidate democracy.

Frighten them all you can! This is the slogan of the whole bourgeois press. Frighten them with all your might! Lie, slander, but frighten them!

The *Birzhevka* does it by fabricating news about the Bolshevik activities. They all do it by spreading rumours about Alexeyev's resignation, and about the imminent German offensive against Petrograd, as if it has not been proven by facts that it is the Kornilov generals (to whom Alexeyev undoubtedly belongs) who are capable of opening the front to the Germans both in Galicia and near Riga, as well as near Petrograd, and that it is the Kornilov generals that are arousing the greatest hatred in the army against General Headquarters.

To give this method of frightening democracy a most "solid" and convincing appearance, they all refer to the danger of a "civil war." Of all the species of intimidation, frightening with civil war is perhaps the most widespread. This is how the Rostov-on-the-Don Committee of the People's Freedom Party, in its resolution of September 14 (*Ryech*, No. 210) formulated this widespread idea, which is very welcome in philistine circles:

> The Committee is convinced that civil war may sweep away all the gains of the revolution and drown in rivers of blood our young, not yet consolidated freedom; it is therefore the opinion of the Committee that an energetic protest against deepening the revolution as proposed by the unrealisable Socialist Utopias is necessary in order to save the gains of the revolution. . . .

Here, in the clearest, most precise, well considered and substantial form, is expressed the fundamental idea which is to be met with innumerable times in the editorial articles of the *Ryech*, in the articles of Plekhanov and Potresov, in the editorials of Menshevik

papers, etc., etc. It will therefore be useful to dwell on this idea more in detail.

First of all, let us try to analyse the civil war question a little more concretely, among other things also on the basis of the half year's experience of our revolution.

This experience, in full accord with the experience of all the European revolutions, from the end of the eighteenth century on, shows us that civil war is the sharpest form of the class struggle, it is that point in the class struggle when clashes and battles, economic and political, repeating themselves, growing, broadening, becoming acute, turn into an armed struggle of one class against another class. Most often—one may say almost always—there is to be observed in all more or less free and advanced countries a civil war between those classes whose contradictory position towards each other is created and deepened by the entire economic development of capitalism, by the entire history of modern society the world over, namely, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

During the past half year of our revolution, we have thus, on May 3-4 and July 16-17, gone through very strong spontaneous outbursts which closely approach the beginning of civil war on the part of the proletariat. On the other hand, the Kornilov revolt represented a military conspiracy supported by the landowners and capitalists, and led by the Cadet Party, a revolt which has already brought about an actual beginning of the civil war on the part of the bourgeoisie.

Such are the facts. Such is the history of our own revolution. We must learn most of all from this history, we must ponder most of all on its course and its class meaning.

Let us try to compare the beginnings of the proletarian and of the bourgeois civil war in Russia from the standpoint of: 1. the spontaneous nature of the movement; 2. its aims; 3. the consciousness of the masses participating in it; 4. the forces in the movement; 5. its tenacity. We think that if all the parties which are now "recklessly spreading" the words "civil war" were to approach the question in this way, and make an attempt actually to study the beginnings of the civil war, the class-consciousness of the entire Russian Revolution would gain a very great deal.

Let us begin with the spontaneous nature of the movement. For the July 16-17 movement we have the testimony of such witnesses as the Menshevik *Rabochaya Gazeta*, and the S.-R. *Dyelo Naroda*,

which have recognised the fact that the movement sprang up spontaneously. This testimony I quoted in an article published in the *Proletarskoye Dyelo*, and issued as a separate leaflet entitled *An Answer.* For obvious reasons, however, the Mensheviks and the S.-R.'s, in defending themselves and their part in persecuting the Bolsheviks, officially continue to deny the spontaneous nature of the outburst of July 16-17.

Let us put aside for the present the controversial matter. Let us take what is undisputed. The spontaneous nature of the May 3-4 movement is denied by no one. This spontaneous movement was joined in by the Bolshevik Party under the slogan of "All Power to the Soviets"; it was joined in independently of the Bolsheviks by the late Linde, who led 30,000 armed soldiers into the street ready to arrest the government. (The coming out of these troops, by the way, has not been investigated and studied. If it is examined closely, and May 3 is placed in the historic sequence of events, *i.e.*, looked upon as a link in the chain which extends from March 12 to September 11, it becomes clear that the fault and the error of the Bolsheviks lies in the *insufficient* revolutionism of their tactics, and by no means in excessive revolutionism, of which the philistines accuse us.)

The spontaneous nature of the movement leading to the beginning of civil war on the part of the proletariat is thus beyond doubt. On the other hand, there is not even a trace of anything resembling spontaneity in the Kornilov affair: that was only a conspiracy of generals who hoped to carry part of the army by fraud and by the force of military command.

That the spontaneity of the movement is proof of its depth among the masses, of the firmness of its roots, of its inevitability, is beyond doubt. The proletarian revolution is firmly rooted, the bourgeois counter-revolution is without roots—this is what the facts prove if looked upon from the point of view of the spontaneous nature of the movement.

Let us now look at the aims of the movement. The movement of May 3-4 was very close to adopting the Bolshevik slogans, whereas that of July 16-17 directly advanced under these slogans, under their influence and guidance. Of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorest peasantry, of peace and an immediate offer of peace, of confiscating the landowners' lands—of all these chief *aims* of the proletarian civil war, the party of the Bolsheviks spoke per-

fectly openly, definitely, clearly, precisely, in everybody's hearing, in its papers and in verbal propaganda.

Of the aims of the Kornilov affair we all know, and no one among the democratic elements disputes that they consisted in a dictatorship of the landowners and the bourgeoisie, dispersal of the Soviets, preparation for the restoration of the monarchy. The Cadet Party, this main Kornilovist party (by the way, it ought to be called from now on the Kornilov Party), while possessing a large press and greater forces for propaganda than the Bolsheviks, has never dared and does not dare openly to tell the people either about the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or about the dispersal of the Soviets, or about the Kornilovist aims in general!

As for the aims of the movement, the facts tell us that the proletarian civil war can come out with an open exposition of its final aims before the people, thus winning the sympathies of the toilers, whereas the bourgeois civil war can attempt to lead part of the masses only by concealing its aims; hence a tremendous difference as far as the class-consciousness of the masses is concerned.

Objective data concerning this question seem to exist only in relation to party affiliation and elections. There seem to be no other facts which would allow a clear judgment about the class consciousness of the masses. That the proletarian-revolutionary movement is represented by the Bolshevik Party, and the bourgeois counter-revolutionary movement by the Cadet Party, is clear and can hardly be disputed after the half year's experience of the revolution. Three comparisons of a factual nature can be made concerning the question under consideration. A comparison of the May elections to the borough councils in Petrograd with the August elections to the city council shows a decrease in Cadet votes and a tremendous increase in Bolshevik votes. The Cadet press admits that, as a rule, where masses of workers are concentrated, the strength of Bolshevism is to be observed.

In the absence of any statistics concerning the fluctuation of party members, the attendance of meetings, etc., the conscious participation of the *masses* in the parties, may be judged only from published data concerning cash collections for the party. These data show a tremendous mass heroism of the Bolshevik workers in collecting money for the *Pravda*, for the papers that were suppressed, etc. The reports of such collections have always been published. Among the Cadets we see nothing of the kind: their party work is

being obviously "fed" by contributions from the rich. There is not a trace of active aid on the part of the masses.

Finally, a comparison between the movements of May 3-4 and July 16-17 on the one hand and the Kornilov affair on the other shows that the Bolsheviks directly point out to the masses their enemy in the civil war, namely, the bourgeoisie, the landowners, and the capitalists. On the other hand, the Kornilov affair has already shown that the army that followed Kornilov was *directly deceived*, a fact made obvious by the first meeting of the "Wild Division" * and the Kornilov detachments with the Petrograd masses.

Furthermore, what are the data concerning the *strength* of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the civil war? The strength of the Bolsheviks lies only in the numbers and class consciousness of the proletarians, in the sympathy of the S.-R. and Menshevik "rank and file" (*i.e.*, workers and poorest peasants), with the Bolshevik slogans. It is a fact that it was these slogans that actually won over the *majority* of the active revolutionary masses in Petrograd on May 3-4, July 1, and July 16-17.

A comparison of the data concerning "parliamentary" elections with the data concerning the above-named mass movements, fully corroborates, as far as Russia is concerned, an observation often made in the West, namely, that the *strength* of the revolutionary proletariat, from the point of view of influencing the *masses* and drawing them into the struggle, is incomparably larger in the *extra-parliamentary* than in the parliamentary struggle. This is a very important observation as regards civil war.

It is quite clear why all the circumstances and all the environment of parliamentary struggle and elections minimise the strength of the oppressed classes in comparison with the strength which they actually can develop in civil war.

The strength of the Cadets and the Kornilov movement lies in the power of *wealth*. That the Anglo-French capitalists and imperialists are *in favour* of the Cadets and the Kornilov movement is proven by a long series of political actions and by the press. It is common knowledge that the entire "Right Wing" of the Moscow Conference of August 25 was wild in its support of Kornilov and Kaledin. It is common knowledge that the French and the English bourgeois press "aided" Kornilov. There are indications that he was aided by the *banks*.

* A division of Caucasian mountaineer troops.—*Ed.*

All the power of wealth stood behind Kornilov—yet what a miserable and sudden collapse! The social forces that may be detected among the Kornilovists are, besides the wealthy, only two: the "Wild Division" and the Cossacks. In the first instance we have *only* the power of ignorance and deception. This force is the more formidable the longer the press remains in the hands of the bourgeoisie. After a victory in the civil war, the proletariat would undermine *this* source of "strength" once and for all.

As to the Cossacks, we deal here with a layer of the population consisting of rich, small or middle landowners (the average area of land owning is about 135 acres) in one of the outlying regions of Russia, where the population has retained many mediæval traits in its way of living, economy, and customs. We can detect here the social-economic basis for the Russian Vendée.* But what have the *facts* related to the Kornilov-Kaledin movement proved? *Not even* Kaledin, the "beloved leader" supported by the Guchkovs, Milyukovs, Ryabushinskys and Co., has created a mass movement!! Kaledin marched towards civil war much more "directly," much more unhesitatingly than did the Bolsheviks. Kaledin directly "went to arouse the Don." Still, Kaledin has not aroused a mass movement in his "home" region, in a Cossack region far removed from the general Russian democracy! On the contrary, we observe on the part of the proletariat spontaneous outbursts of a movement in the centre of influence and power of the anti-Bolshevik, all-Russian democracy.

Objective data on the attitude of various strata and economic groups of the Cossacks towards democracy and the Kornilov affair are lacking. There are only indications to the effect that the majority of the poor and middle Cossacks are rather inclined towards democracy and that only the officers and the top layer of the well-to-do Cossacks are entirely in favour of Kornilov.

However that may be, the extreme weakness of a mass Cossack movement in favour of a bourgeois counter-revolution appears historically proven after the experience of September 8-13.

There remains the last question—as to the *tenacity* of the movement. As far as the Bolshevik, proletarian-revolutionary movement is concerned, we have the undisputed fact that the struggle against Bolshevism was conducted for the half year since the

* The region where the peasants, under the influence of the church, supported the nobles during the French Revolution in 1793.—*Ed.*

existence of a republic in Russia both as an ideological struggle, with a *gigantic* prevalence of press organs and propaganda forces on the side of the opponents of Bolshevism (even if we risk classing as "ideological" struggle the campaign of slander), and as a struggle *by means of repressions,* with hundreds arrested, our main printing plant demolished, and the chief newspaper and a number of other papers suppressed. The result is shown in facts: a tremendous growth of Bolshevism in the August Petrograd elections, a strengthening of the internationalist and "Left" trends in both the S.-R. and Menshevik Parties—trends that are approaching Bolshevism. This means that the tenacity of the proletarian-revolutionary movement in republican Russia is very great. The facts tell us that the combined efforts of the Cadets and the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks *have not succeeded* in weakening that movement in the least. On the contrary, it was the coalition of the Kornilovists with "democracy" that *strengthened* Bolshevism. There can be no other means of struggle against the proletarian-revolutionary trend than ideological influence *and* repressions.

Data concerning the tenacity of the Cadet-Kornilov movement are still lacking. The Cadets have suffered no persecution at all. Even Guchkov has been set free; Maklakov and Milyukov have not even been arrested. The *Ryech* has not been suppressed. The Cadets are being spared. The Cadet-Kornilovists are being *courted* by Kerensky's government. Let us put the question this way: assuming that the Anglo-French and Russian Ryabushinskys will give millions and millions more to the Cadets, the *Yedinstvo,* the *Dyen,* etc., to conduct a new election campaign in Petrograd; is it probable that now, after the Kornilov affair, the number of their votes will increase? The answer to this question can hardly be anything but negative, judging by meetings, etc.

Summing up the results of our analysis where we compared the data furnished by the history of the Russian Revolution, we arrive at the conclusion that the beginning of the civil war on the part of the proletariat has revealed the strength, the class-consciousness, the deep-rootedness, the growth, and the solidity of the movement. The beginning of the civil war on the part of the bourgeoisie has revealed no strength, no class-consciousness among the masses, no depth whatsoever, no chance of victory.

The union of the Cadets with the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks against

the Bolsheviks, *i.e.*, against the revolutionary proletariat, has been tried in practice for a number of months, and that union of the temporarily dissembling Kornilovists with "democracy" has led in fact not to a weakening but to a strengthening of the Bolsheviks, to a collapse of the "coalition," to strengthening the "Left" opposition also among the Mensheviks.

A union of the Bolsheviks with the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks against the Cadets, against the bourgeoisie, *has not yet been tried;* or, to be more precise, such a union *has been tried at one front only,* for *five days* only, September 8-13, the time of the Kornilov affair, and this union yielded at that time, with an ease never yet achieved in any revolution, a victory over the counter-revolution, such a crushing suppression of the bourgeois, landowners', capitalist, Allied-imperialist and Cadet counter-revolution, that the civil war *from that side* crumbled to dust, turned into nothing at the very beginning, disintegrated before any "battle" had taken place.

In the face of this historic fact the entire bourgeois press with all its helpers (the Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Breshkovskayas, etc.) is shouting with all its might that a union of the Bolsheviks with the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s "threatens" the horrors of civil war!

This would be funny, if it were not so sad. It is sad indeed that such an open, self-evident, glaring absurdity, such a mockery of the facts of the whole history of our revolution, can still find listeners. . . . This only proves how widespread still is the selfish bourgeois lie (a phenomenon that cannot be avoided as long as the press is monopolised by the bourgeoisie), a lie that drowns and shouts down the most undoubted, palpable, and undisputed lessons of the revolution.

If there is an absolutely undisputed lesson of the revolution, one absolutely proven by facts, it is that only a union of the Bolsheviks with the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks, only an immediate passing of all power to the Soviets would make civil war in Russia impossible. For no civil war begun by the bourgeoisie against such a union, against the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies is thinkable; such a "war" would not even live to see one battle: the bourgeoisie, for the second time after the Kornilov affair, would not find even a "Wild Division," not even the former number of Cossack detachments to move against the Soviet government!

The peaceful development of any revolution is, generally speak-

ing, an extremely rare and difficult thing, for a revolution is the maximum sharpening of the sharpest class contradictions; but in a peasant country at a time when a union of the proletariat with the peasantry *can* give *peace* to the masses that are worn out by a most unjust and criminal war, when such a union can give the peasantry *all the land,* in such a country, at such an exceptional historic moment, a peaceful development of the revolution is *possible* and *probable* if all power passes to the Soviets. Within the Soviets the struggle of parties for power may proceed peacefully, with the Soviets fully democratised, with "petty thefts" and defrauding of democratic principles eliminated—such as giving the soldiers one representative to every five hundred, while the workers have one representative to every thousand voters. In a democratic republic such petty thefts are doomed to disappear.

Against Soviets that have given all the land to the peasants without compensation and offer a just peace to all the peoples, against such Soviets a union of the English and French with the Russian bourgeoisie, Kornilovs, Buchanans, Ryabushinskys, Milyukovs, Plekhanovs, and Potresovs, presents no dangers at all; it is completely impotent.

The resistance of the bourgeoisie against giving over the land to the peasants without compensation, against similar reforms in other realms of life, against a just peace and a break with imperialism, is, of course, unavoidable. But in order that such resistance may reach the stage of civil war, *masses* of some kind are necessary, masses capable of fighting and vanquishing the Soviets. Such masses the bourgeoisie does *not* have, and cannot get anywhere. The sooner and the more resolutely the Soviets take all power, the sooner both the "Wild Divisions" and the Cossacks will split, dividing into an insignificant minority of conscious Kornilovists and a tremendous majority of those in favour of a democratic and *Socialist* (for it is with Socialism that we shall deal at that time) union of workers and peasants.

Once power has passed to the Soviets, the resistance of the bourgeoisie will result in *scores and hundreds* of workers and peasants "watching," supervising, controlling, and testing *every single* capitalist, for the interests of the workers and peasants will demand struggle against the capitalists' deception of the people. The forms and methods of this testing and control have been developed and simplified by capitalism itself. by such creations of capitalism as

the banks, the large factories, the trusts, the railroads, the post office, the consumers' societies, and the trade unions. It will be quite sufficient for the Soviets to punish those capitalists who evade the most detailed accounting or who deceive the people, by confiscating all their property and arresting them for a short time, to break all resistance of the bourgeoisie by these bloodless means. For it is through the banks, once they are nationalised, through the unions of employees, through the post office, the consumers' societies, the trade unions, that the control and the accounting will become universal, all-powerful, ubiquitous, and invincible.

And the Russian Soviets, the union of the Russian workers with the poorest peasants, are not alone in their *steps* towards Socialism. If we were alone, we should not be able to accomplish this task peacefully and completely, for this task is essentially an international one. But we have enormous reserves, the armies of the most advanced workers in other countries, where the break of Russia with imperialism and the imperialist war will inevitably accelerate the rising workers' Socialist revolution.

Some speak about "rivers of blood" in a civil war. This is mentioned in the resolution of the Cadet-Kornilovists quoted above. This phrase is repeated in a thousand ways by all the bourgeois and opportunists. After the Kornilov affair all the class-conscious workers are laughing and will laugh and cannot help laughing at it.

However, the question of "rivers of blood" in the war-time we are going through now can and must be placed on the basis of an approximate accounting of forces, consequences, and results; it must be taken seriously and not as an empty, stock phrase, not as simply an hypocrisy of the Cadets, who have done *everything* in their power to enable Kornilov to flood Russia with "rivers of blood," restore a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the power of the landowners, and the monarchy.

"Rivers of blood," they say. Let us analyse *this* side of the question as well.

Let us assume that the vacillations of the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s continue; that these parties do *not* give over power to the Soviets; that they do *not* overthrow Kerensky; that they restore the old rotten compromise with the bourgeoisie in a somewhat different form (say "non-partisan" *Kornilovists* instead of Cadets); that they do not replace the apparatus of state power by the Soviet apparatus; that they do not offer peace; that they do not break with imperialism,

and do not confiscate the land of the landowners. Let us assume that this is the outcome of the present vacillations of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks, of this present "September."

The experience of our own revolution tells us most clearly that the consequence of this would be a still further weakening of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks, a further break between them and the masses, an incredible growth of indignation and bitterness among the masses, a tremendous growth of sympathy with the revolutionary proletariat, with the Bolsheviks.

Under such conditions, the proletariat of the capital will be still closer to a Commune, to a workers' uprising, to the conquest of power, to a civil war in its highest and most decisive form, than it is at present; after the experience of May 3-4 and July 16-17 such a result must be recognised as historically unavoidable.

"Rivers of blood," cry the Cadets. But such rivers of blood would give the victory to the proletariat and the poorest peasantry, and there are ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that this victory would yield *peace* instead of the imperialist war, *i.e.*, that it would save the lives of *hundreds of thousands* of men who are now shedding their blood for the sake of a division of spoils and seizures (annexations) by the capitalists. If May 3-4 had ended by the passing of all power to the Soviets, and within the Soviets the Bolsheviks allied with the poorest peasantry had won, then even if it had cost "rivers of blood," it would have saved the lives of the *half million* Russian soldiers who certainly perished in the battles of July 2.

This is how every class-conscious Russian worker and soldier figures, this is how he must figure, if he weighs and analyses the question of civil war now raised everywhere; and, of course, such a worker or soldier, who has lived and thought many things, will not be frightened by the cries of "rivers of blood" raised by persons, parties, and groups willing to sacrifice *more millions* of Russian soldiers for the sake of Constantinople, Lemberg, Warsaw, and "victory over Germany."

No "rivers of blood" in an internal civil war can even approximately equal those *seas* of blood which the Russian imperialists have shed since July 2 (in spite of the very great chances of avoiding this by giving over the power to the Soviets).

While this war is going on, you, Messrs. Milyukovs, Potresovs,

and Plekhanovs, be careful about your arguments against "rivers of blood" in civil war, for the soldiers have seen *seas* of blood and know what they mean.

The international situation of the Russian Revolution now, in 1917, the fourth year of a terrifically burdensome and criminal war, that has worn out the peoples, is such that an offer of a just peace on the part of the Russian proletariat victorious in the civil war would have ninety-nine chances out of a hundred to achieve a truce and a peace *without the shedding of further seas of blood.*

For a combination of the warring Anglo-French and German imperialisms *against* the proletarian-Socialist Russian republic is *impossible* in practice, while a combination of the English, Japanese, and American imperialisms against us is extremely difficult of realisation and is not dangerous to us at all, due to Russia's geographic situation. On the other hand, the existence of revolutionary and Socialist proletarian masses within *all* the European states is a fact; the maturing and the inevitability of the world-wide Socialist revolution is beyond doubt, and such a revolution can be seriously aided, not by delegations and not by playing at Stockholm conferences * with the foreign Plekhanovs or Tseretelis, but only by pushing forward the Russian Revolution.

The bourgeoisie wails about the inevitable defeat of a Commune in Russia, *i.e.*, defeat of the proletariat if it were to conquer power. These are false, selfish class wailings.

Having conquered power, the proletariat will have *every* chance of retaining it and of leading Russia until a victorious revolution in the West.

For, firstly, we have learned much since the Commune, and we would not repeat its fatal errors, we would not leave the banks in the hands of the bourgeoisie, we would not confine ourselves to defending our line against being disrupted by the Versailles ** (the same as the Kornilovists), but we would take the offensive against them and crush them.

Secondly, the victorious proletariat will give Russia peace, and no power on earth will be able to overthrow a government of *peace,*

* A conference initiated by the Scandinavian Socialist parties and inspired by the German pro-war Socialists.—*Ed.*

** The counter-revolutionary elements who made their headquarters in Versailles during the Paris Commune of 1871.—*Ed.*

a government of an honest, sincere, just peace, after all the horrors of more than three years' butchery of the peoples.

Thirdly, the victorious proletariat will give the peasantry the land immediately and without compensation. And a tremendous majority of the peasantry—worn out and embittered by the "playing around with the landowners" practised by our government, particularly the "coalition" government, particularly the Kerensky government—will support the victorious proletariat absolutely, unreservedly, with every means in its power.

You, Messrs. Mensheviks and S.-R.'s, are all talking about the "heroic efforts" of the people. Only recently I have come across this phrase over and over again in the leading articles in your *Izvestiya* of the Central Executive Committee. With you this is a *mere* phrase. But the workers and peasants read it and *ponder* it, and such deliberation—reinforced by the experience of the Kornilov affair, by the "experience" of Peshekhonov's ministry, by the "experience" of Chernov's ministry, *and so forth*—every such deliberation inevitably leads to the conclusion that this "heroic effort" is nothing but confidence of the poorest peasantry in the city workers as their most faithful allies and leaders. The heroic effort is nothing but the victory of the Russian proletariat over the bourgeoisie in civil war, for such a victory alone will save the country from painful vacillations, it alone will show the way out, it alone will give land, will give peace.

If it is possible to effect a union of the city workers with the poorest peasantry through an immediate passing of power to the Soviets, so much the better. The Bolsheviks will do *everything* to secure this *peaceful* course of development of the revolution. Without this, even the Constituent Assembly, by itself, will not save the situation, for even there the S.-R.'s may continue their "playing" at collaboration with the Cadets, with Breshko-Breshkovskaya and Kerensky (wherein are they better than the Cadets?), and so on, and so forth.

If even the experience of the Kornilov affair has taught the "democracy" nothing, and it continues the destructive policy of vacillation and compromise, then we say: nothing destroys the proletarian revolution more than these vacillations. That being the case, do not frighten us, gentlemen, with civil war: civil war is inevitable, if you do not wish to break with Kornilovism and the

"coalition" right now, once and for all; and this war will bring victory over the exploiters, it will give the land to the peasants, it will give peace to the peoples, it will open the right road to the victorious revolution of the world Socialist proletariat.

N. LENIN.

Rabochy Put, No. 12, September 29, 1917.